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CONTENTS

COMMENTS . . . . . . Page 457
THE MEDITERRANEAN TANGLE . . 459
THE THIRD EVACUATION. By Tom Harrisson 460
A LONDON DIARY 461
THIS ENGLAND 462
A LANDS COMMISSION. By Sir George Stapledon 463
GETTING ONE'S HAIR CUT. By Y. Y.. 463
DIGGING FOR MRS. MILLER. By John Strachey 464
CZECH AUTUMN. By David Gascoyne 466
PLAYS AND PICTURES 467
CORRESPONDENCE 467
From F. G.; Edward Thompson; Michael de la Bedoyere; Harold Binns; M. W. Murray; Esmé Wingfield-Stratford; E. G. Savage; Edward Pollitzer; One of the Next Generation; Aleck Bourne; François Laffitte; A Retailer.
BOOKS IN GENERAL. By V. S. Pritchett 470
REVIEWS:
New Novels. By Brian Howard . 472
Reviews—*contd.* *Page*
Sex and the New World. By Tom Paine 472
Ikenobo. By V. Sackville-West . 474
Marvell. By G. W. Stonier . . 474
Our Oldest Enemies. By Harry Roberts 476
Immortality. By Rose Macaulay . 476
SHORTER NOTICE 478
WEEK-END COMPETITIONS . . . 478
CROSSWORD 478
THE WEEK IN THE CITY. By Cynicus 479

MR. ROOSEVELT AND THE WAR

MR. ROOSEVELT'S re-election is a more severe blow to the Nazi than many military victories. We have now the assurance that a big and generous personality will lead America not only through the period of war but also in the momentous period of settlement. We have never doubted Mr. Willkie's friendliness, but the values at stake in this struggle could never have meant for the representative of Wall Street what they meant to a humanitarian of the President's calibre. It is no less a reason for satisfaction that Mr. Roosevelt scored a substantial majority of the popular vote. He will have the full support of a predominantly Democratic Congress. The Gallup polls, for the first time, proved to be seriously misleading. The first reaction of the Opposition is to talk national unity, and the suggestion is being made that Mr. Willkie should be included in the Cabinet. There will be no confused period of interregnum such as occurs when a new President takes office and no loss of time and energy in changing the personnel of the civil service.

Situations calling for momentous decisions will soon confront Mr. Roosevelt. It has been rumoured that Hitler may soon put out proposals for peace, based on the acceptance of his New Order for Europe by such votaries of freedom as Laval, Franco, Antonescu and Quisling. This would be addressed primarily to America. But the the idea may have been based on the supposition of Mr. Willkie's election, on which the Nazis have spent millions of dollars. There may be a threat of new aggression on a considerable scale by Japan. The Japanese have been shortening their front on the Chinese mainland, and they have withdrawn their troops from Kwangsi. This is good news for the Chinese, but it may also mean that Japan is clearing the decks for an attack on Singapore, and perhaps on the Dutch East Indies. These can be protected only by the American fleet.

Nothing in Mr. Churchill's speech clashed with the optimism that Mr. Roosevelt's return evokes. He added nothing, however, to our knowledge of the facts, save that he gave the total air-raid casualties as fourteen thousand killed and twenty thousand seriously injured. Mr. Morrison added the interesting fact that after two months of Blitzkrieg 85 per cent. of the population still sleep at home. While Mr. Churchill gave the weather some of the credit for the diminution of night bombing, he hinted at other reasons. That is a very cautious way of saying that we owe an immeasurable debt to all our defenders, to the gunners as well as to the airmen. He may have been talking to the German people when he casually mentioned our preparations to continue the war into 1944 and 1945. His references to the tasks of the army suggested that the future offensive on land may be rather a small-scale, but presumably highly mechanised, effort to help this or other subjugated country to liberate itself, than a big Continental campaign culminating in an invasion of Germany.

Hitler's Two Objects in France

The Fifth Column is playing an increasingly important part in the affairs of unhappy France. M. le Comte Fernand de Brinon, the fishiest of the fishy, has been picked out of the gutter and raised to the rank of Ambassador. It is he who will represent the Vichy Government in Paris and receive orders from Herr Abetz, the German "Ambassador" in Paris. A pretty pair, indeed. The two of them, Bonnet's chief secret agent, and Ribbentrop's chief spy in France, had for years been the leading personages of that Fifth Column organisation, the Comité France-Allemagne, at whose banquets, in December, 1938, Bonnet and Ribbentrop celebrated the Franco-German entente. Another prominent person on the Committee was M. Henry-Haye, Vichy's present Ambassador in Washington, whose unsavoury trickery in his dealings with the American financial authorities have made him the laughing-stock of America. But Brinon is a more skilful trickster. He has managed to combine his marriage to a Jewess, and his employment by one of the biggest Jewish banks in Paris—which ran M. de Brinon's pro-Nazi articles in its paper, *L'Information*, in the post-Munich heyday of the Franco-Nazi rapprochement—with the functions of a constant secret agent who travelled between Bonnet and Ribbentrop. At the beginning of the war, Brinon discreetly disappeared from the public view, except on one occasion when he appeared in the lobbies of the Senate, only to be thrown out by an usher. But, with Germany's victory, he and a lot of other scum have risen to the surface, and are thriving on their country's defeat and humiliation.

With people like Laval and Brinon at the top, we must expect the worst of Franco-German "co-operation." Even if, as Ministers again said in Parliament on Tuesday, Pétain is well-intentioned and decent as well as bitterly disillusioned, it is clear that he has no ideas and no initiative of his own, and is, in effect, endorsing all Laval's decisions, including the decision to raise him to the rank of Foreign Minister. Pétain's broadcast last week was pathetic. The old man proclaimed himself the Führer of France; but then admitted that he had really nothing to offer his people except the vague hope that the Germans would "improve the lot of the war prisoners." The hope that these prisoners would be released was not even mentioned; the Marshal has to be thankful for small mercies. And when Laval suggested, a few days later, that the Government might go to Paris, the Germans attacked his suggestion as impudent. Having secured Pétain's agreement to "co-operate," the Germans can now afford to be rude to the French again.

What they are getting from the agreement themselves has not been stated, either on the French or on the German side; but it is clear that Hitler is pursuing a double object. One is to strengthen himself militarily for a long war at the expense of the countries he has defeated; the other is to secure their "co-operation," which would be the main feature of his "United States of Europe" plan. Regarding the first point, the Germans have clearly demanded something from France in the way of warships and air and naval bases. Through its Ambassador in one of the non-belligerent countries, the British Government has at last asked the French for some definite information about the exact nature of this part of the "co-operation" pact. Obviously, we do not want to be forestalled again by the Germans; but one has not the impression that this request to Vichy was presented in an adequately firm manner, which would produce immediate results and avoid dangerous delaying tactics on the part of the Vichy Government.

North Africa, Syria, and the Mediterranean generally need watching more than ever; even though there have been suggestions to the effect that the temper of North Africa is warming up against any new surrenders, and that Weygand, who is on the spot, has been impressed by this temper. But it is probable that the Germans will be careful to seize whatever they need with as little publicity as possible, and there is no guarantee that Vichy will not be as discreet, as it already is about the nature of the co-operation agreement. As for Italy's territorial demands on France, they will not come till the next big "squeeze."

The other side to it is this. Having failed in his invasion of England, Hitler seems to be preparing a vast peace plan which would "guarantee" the sacredness of British and American soil, provided Europe is left to him. The basis of this plan will be the declarations of their willingness to "co-operate," signed by the various Lavals and Quislings and Leopolds and Antonescus, and possibly Prince Pauls and Francos of Europe. Hitler's calculation may have been based on the supposition of a Willkie victory. The plan will, in any case, be drawn up chiefly for America's benefit. Already Bonnet, always acting as a great *connoisseur* of America, has been expressing the belief that "America will be pleased with the Franco-German pact."

A Spanish Conquest

While General Franco was receiving on his altars a superb gift of gold vessels from this country, he has dealt British diplomacy a nasty blow in Tangiers. Appeasement has earned, here as elsewhere, the customary reward. This place was still, when the war broke out, an international city. It had a French governor, a cosmopolitan police force, a committee of control composed of the British, French and Spanish consuls, which enjoyed a right of veto, and a legislative assembly. This week the last of these institutions vanished, and Tangiers became *de facto* a Spanish town. The first step was taken in June, when Spanish troops marched in. To this we assented, for we were then facing disaster. The commander of this force, Colonel Yuste, has now issued a proclamation which abolishes both the Committee of Control and the Legislative Assembly which "shall cease to function." In the name of Spain he "takes full charge of the zone of Tangiers." Since he doubles the roles of military commander and head of the local Fascist Falange, this international city has now become at once a Fascist stronghold and a Spanish military base that threatens the African coast of French Morocco. The reply of the British Government to this destruction of its rights in a port that faces Gibraltar is that the matter is receiving "careful consideration." No doubt the Admiralty are anxious to put off the struggle in the Western Mediterranean as long as possible, but the Axis loses no time in strengthening its position.

Shelter Policy

Mr. Morrison showed himself in his broadcast last Sunday better than his word. He announced that he was getting on with the job of opening more tubes and of tunnelling wherever in London and the Provinces underground shelters were practicable. He added that 100 per cent. safety is impossible, that deep shelter accommodation must always be limited and that the new deep shelters could not be ready this winter. Which is one way, we hope, of reminding himself that we shall need them next winter. He again referred to the use of the lack of deep shelters for defeatist propaganda. It would have been better if the Home Office had called upon Prof. Haldane's expert services two years ago. Mr. Morrison referred in a workmanlike manner to the still too gradual improvements in progress, efforts that are now being made to improve shelters, install bunks, and medical services and other necessities. There is still a great shortage of the necessary materials. Not every one will have understood Mr. Morrison's reference to the shelter value of reinforced concrete houses. Experience in this country has so far confirmed that of Spain—that steel framed buildings do not collapse even when they are hit, and that the first and second floors of such buildings are safer shelter than many basements that are scheduled as shelters. This, as Mr. Morrison says, adds substantially to existing shelter accommodation all over the country.

Foreign Doctors

It is time for Mr. Morrison also to make an announcement on the internment of aliens. As a correspondent points out in our columns this week no political refugee has yet been released under category 19. Mr. Morrison and Mr. MacDonald might also notice the position of many aliens who are not interned but left unemployed, in spite of qualifications which would have made them specially useful. We could give many individual instances. The *British Medical Journal* of November 2nd publishes a letter which gives a particularly indefensible example. Some 25 or 30 doctors, refugees from the Nazis, have had full medical training in this country and are qualified to practice here. Most of them have been in England for six or seven years; most of them could have been naturalised by now if they had done work that offered economic independence more quickly. (According to British law foreign doctors have to go through the whole routine of a British training even when they already possess a far better medical degree than the British before they begin.) Though told by the Home Office about three years after they had started their courses (and paid most of the fees), that they would not be allowed to establish themselves as doctors in this country, most of these doctors did actually obtain resident hospital posts. In the early summer of this year they were all dismissed under the general order that forbade the employment of Austrians and Germans on the medical staffs of hospitals which might possibly have members of the Forces as patients. That means almost any hospital. Only three or four of these doctors were interned; all but one have now been released. They all now are exempt under one of the new categories. They are officially regarded as trustworthy and friendly aliens. Yet they are not permitted to work and many of them have no means of earning a living. The position is absurd, and Lord Lytton, as Chairman of the Advisory Committee, has written expressing "entire sympathy" with their case and offering to do all that he can do in his advisory capacity. Lord Lytton's letter was written in August. This is November. Who enforces this absurd ban? The War Office?

Economic Notes (from an Industrial Correspondent)

There is no doubt that the Germans are now building submarines at a great pace, with a view to keeping up, and intensifying, their attacks on our merchant shipping. This involves, for them, a serious problem of training crews able to stand the strain of submarine warfare; but we must assume that they are tackling this problem on a scale which corresponds to their rate of building. We have therefore to face the prospect of continued submarine warfare even more active than that which we have experienced during the past few months. Our answer is in part a more rapid acquisition of destroyers, either by building or by acquisition from the United States; but it is also clear that our shipyard programme needs upward revision. We are already arranging to build new tonnage in Canada on a substantial scale; but equally urgent is the problem of speeding up the repair of vessels damaged, but not sunk, by submarine or air attack, or by the new mines which are now being used against us. Damage to vessels not sunk is not shown in the published figures; but it is apt to be serious—especially where mines are the cause—and to require extensive repairs. That this repair work is being coped with adequately and expeditiously we hope and believe; but it necessarily uses up scarce kinds of labour and equipment and reduces the rate of new building which is practicable in this country. This is a reason for improvising a big shipbuilding industry in the United States, as was done towards the end of the last war, and for adopting the most rapid methods of standardised construction. There is no prospect, so far, in this country of a serious shortage of imported goods; but we need to look a long way ahead, and to reckon with the probability that the Germans, even without the French navy, will have a great many more submarines in a few months' time than they have to-day.

* * *

Shortage of civilian supplies has hardly begun yet, in any serious sense; but it is going to begin very soon. All the evidence goes to show that we must have been consuming stocks very heavily during the past few months, and that this is about the time when the restrictions on the supply of materials imposed by the Board of Trade are due to begin seriously affecting retail markets. The well-to-do have doubtless for the most part stocked themselves up against the coming emergency, often by encroaching on capital for the purchase of consumers' goods. The poorer people have not been able to do this, and have, in any case, often no facilities for storage. Accordingly, the pressure of short supplies will fall on them first; and it will obviously fall most heavily on those whose goods are destroyed by air attack. It will be monstrously unjust if the Purchase Tax is allowed to fall on poor people who are replacing necessary goods and chattels destroyed by German bombers; and provision will have to be made for enabling such people to replace their lost possessions at prices which they can afford to pay. Apart from this, there is every reason for increased stringency in restricting supplies of consumers' goods which have to be made either of imported materials or by machinery or labour adaptable to war production. Restriction of supplies will be felt much less if it is made now, with some effort to conserve stocks, than if it is allowed to come suddenly a little later, when the stocks of goods already made or in process of manufacture have been used up.

* * *

A general deep shelter policy would need, according to the estimates made in the new Labour Research Department pamphlet (*Break the Cement Ring, 2d.*), roughly twelve million tons of cement. The present annual productive capacity of the country is round about nine million tons; but much of this is needed for defence works, factory building, repair of war damage, and other uses apart from shelters. Doubtless capacity can be substantially increased if the ring is broken, but how rapidly? It is at all events clear that a policy of really safe deep shelters for everyone is not practicable in the immediate future. The L.R.D. pamphlet proposes a "first stage" scheme involving about five million tons of cement; and even this is evidently more than the industry is ready to supply at present after complying with the demands of the War Office and the Supply Departments. These facts provide no reason for not going ahead with deep shelters as fast as we can; and they provide excellent reasons for breaking the cement ring promptly and for good and all. But they do mean that, however hard we may go to it, we are starting much too late to make the policy of deep shelters for all who need them practicable for a long time to come.

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THE MEDITERRANEAN TANGLE

WHAT are we to make of the news from Greece, as cheerful as it is puzzling? The Italians are the challengers. They took Albania a year and a half ago, primarily for the purpose of overwhelming the Greeks. They prepared their stroke undisturbed, and they chose their own moment to fling their ultimatum at Athens. In these circumstances an efficient aggressor would have had an irresistible mechanised column ready on the Macedonian frontier to sweep along the road to Salonica at the best pace of its tanks and dive-bombers. Nothing of the kind has happened, and in fact the Italians are so poorly prepared that on this Macedonian Front they have actually had to endure a successful Greek counter-offensive. The slow and trifling Italian advance in Epirus is no compensation for this failure in the more decisive theatre. Our own views of the oppressive Metaxas regime are unchanged, and we should not look to it for any greater regard for the truth in its news than other Dictatorships show. But there is no contradiction of any consequence between the Greek and Italian claims. For the explanation of this mystery we may have to wait. Mussolini may have expected that the Greeks would bow to superior force without resistance. It is also probable that his army lacks stomach for the fight. Again, he may be waiting for Hitler to intervene with an offer of mediation, backed by a threat to support his little accomplice. It is, in the meantime, satisfactory that our naval and air forces have seized their opportunity. The fjords and islands of Greece are a mosaic of harbours, anchorages and air-ports which should serve us well for an enterprising offensive against Italy. Hitherto, by accident or design, we have waged this war with the whole weight of our right arm against Germany. The Italians we have struck at rare intervals with the little finger of our left. Few of us have understood this self-denial. Some said that the distances were too great; but Malta is near enough. Some justified it by their contempt for this minor adversary. But is it not an axiom of strategy to hit the enemy in the weakest and most vulnerable spot? Others feared that the habit of appeasement, once contracted, could not be shaken off. Whatever the true explanation may be, we can no longer hesitate to attack this treacherous foe with all our forces.

There is, however, another reason for our caution in estimating the significance of the military news from Greece. We all understand that diplomacy counts for as much as arms in the Eastern Mediterranean. The stake for which both sides are contending is the mastery of that sea and all its shores. That will not be settled by a battle before Janina or Florina. The crucial points are the Turkish Straits, the oil wells round Mosul and the Suez Canal. Everything turns on the ultimate decision of the hesitating Turks. On that subject the enigmatic and ambiguous speech of President Inönü gave us little guidance. He is still our ally, he tells us, but not, it would seem, to the point of action. He will defend the independence of his country. Finally he congratulates himself on the growing intimacy of Russia's friendship. This means, we suppose, in plain English, that while he would like to help us, he has to watch the Russians, who of late have seemed to be somewhat less hostile neighbours. Like every other neutral, he is counting costs and estimating relative strengths. He knows that he may one day find the Italians and Bulgarians, with the Germans behind them, massed on his European frontiers, demanding his adherence to the Axis and a passage for their troops on the way to Syria, Irak and Suez. He is not at all sure whether Stalin might not then veto any effective resistance on his part. Finally, he cannot be certain that we should then be strong enough to back him to any purpose. He has seen us standing stolidly on the defensive, and allowing our army to be immobilised in the deserts of Egypt. Nowhere in the East do we show any initiative, and out of deference to the Vichy Government, which is in effect our enemy, we do nothing to prevent Syria from falling into the possession of the Axis. So Turkey marks time, hesitates and talks in riddles.

In this dangerous situation, two things are clear. First, we must hammer Italian bases with all the might of our bombers and our ships. Secondly, we must win Turkey over to active belligerency. But how? Last week we urged one indispensable step—secure Syria. We should promise their independence to the Syrians, ask the Turks to join us in this offer, and steel ourselves, if necessary, to deal with the opposition of Vichy and its adherents on the spot. But there still remains the Russian difficulty. If Stalin intends to help Hitler to victory by keeping Turkey passive and neutral, what more can we do? Even in that event we should still urge the bold course in Syria. But can nothing be done to influence Russian policy?

In retrospect we believe that the last chance of winning Russia as an active ally vanished when M. Litvinov was dismissed in the spring of 1939. The utmost for which we should now hope would be to persuade her into an attitude of fairly friendly neutrality. That is the course which her own interests would in the long run dictate to her, since a German victory would leave her isolated in her relative weakness. But this argument implies that we should treat her with friendliness, if with American aid we should win. But that is what Stalin will not believe. It is his rooted conviction that Tory England and official America have always been the implacable enemies of the U.S.S.R. He can cite a big and plausible mass of evidence to back this belief. And the worst of it is that some of it is recent. Mr. Churchill has succeeded Mr. Chamberlain and Sir Stafford Cripps has been sent to Moscow, but still there are dark forces that sabotage and neutralise any effort to reach a better understanding with Moscow.

Consider in this context this week's achievement of the Foreign Office. It addressed to Russia a stiff protest against her participation in the Danubian Commission, which it described as a breach of her neutrality. The argument passes our understanding. Russia as the owner of Bessarabia is now a riparian State, with indisputable rights in all matters that touch the navigation of the Danube. In what way she compromised her neutrality is not clear. Certainly the Germans did not welcome her on the Commission: they suffered a diplomatic reverse when she insisted on taking her seat. If she did wrong, then so did Hungary, Jugoslavia and Rumania, which also are neutrals. Why, then, did we address no protest to them? The answer is as sinister as it is simple. The Foreign Office wrapped up in its protest a plain intimation that it does not recognise and may in the future oppose the restoration of Russian rule over Bessarabia. To this M. Molotov has made a stinging and effective answer. Some may suppose that this protest and this warning were merely a conventional pedantry, designed to safeguard our own standing as a member of this Commission. But the Russians can reply that this stupidity does not stand alone. It repeats the earlier refusal of the Foreign Office to recognise the accomplished fact in the Baltic States. We do not propose to discuss the ethics of Russia's action either in Bessarabia or round the Baltic, though we think that in both cases the mass of the population gained by the change. We are content to ask some blunt questions: Does the British Government seriously intend at any time to drive Russia out of Bessarabia and the Baltic States? If not, what is the use of verbal protests? The practical result of what it has done is to inform Stalin that if, by a miracle not yet in sight, we should win an overwhelming victory, he must expect that we will challenge his possession of these territories and doubtless of Eastern Poland as well, which even Lord Curzon assigned as of right to Russia. If that is British policy, is Stalin unreasonable if on the whole he prefers a German victory and works to bring it about? In short, for the sake of these backward and always misgoverned regions of the East, we are risking the liberation of France, Holland and Norway, to say nothing of our own safety.

This is no accidental stupidity. It is part of a fatal trend that has been followed for years. We have cited two instances, but we might add many—the arrest, for example, of the ten Esthonian ships and then of thirteen more. Week after week something happens that effectually warns Moscow not to trust the sincerity of our approaches. While this diplomatic sabotage goes on, our airmen and our sailors risk their lives in vain. We cannot win this war by arms alone. We can win it only with the support of the European masses. But the Foreign Office is equally busy elsewhere, flinging away the faith of the democracies. It fawns on Pétain and flatters Mussolini. Nothing suggests that it regards the oppressed subjects of Mussolini and Franco as allies. And now, by this incredible note on the Danubian question, it once again rebuffs the Soviet Union.

THE THIRD EVACUATION

(This survey is based on information supplied by about 300 correspondents from all over the country, plus visits to 45 sample country towns and villages by whole-time investigators. The position changes rapidly, but the information is as up to date as possible.)

THE evacuation of London on an unprecedented scale began, unplanned, immediately after the first big raid on the East End, Saturday, September 7th. By Monday many had wisely left the dockland area, carrying what they could, often having no idea where they were going. Some, drifting vaguely "West," formed into bands which grew steadily as they trudged through the city, and ended up in whole train-loads bound for "anywhere." Many slept in Greenwich Park, on Hampstead Heath. By September 14th (four days before the Ministry of Health took preliminary steps to meet the new conditions) around a quarter of the population in certain badly hit boroughs had gone.

In a block of West End flats 29 per cent. of the occupants had left by mid-October, 42 per cent. by early November. In a middle-class suburb 208 people were taken as a sample at the beginning of the blitz; 8 per cent. had left by September 20th, 10 per cent. by October 9th, 15 per cent. by October 20th; only four were forced to leave their homes, and none went on the Government scheme. Places they went to included Bournemouth, Chester, Devizes, Minehead, Northampton, Carmarthen, Teignmouth, and Welwyn—a fairly average scatter. In a working-class dormitory about 15 per cent. had gone by the end of October, only one in twenty-five of these being adult males, but there were more women than children. Again, none went under a Government scheme, since this bombed area was technically outside "the County of London." Thus a mass migration spread out, swamping the countryside, so that even by mid-September it was very difficult indeed to get a bed for the night anywhere within sixty miles of London.

It was not until September 24th that the Ministry of Health scheme included mothers accompanying any children of school age; this concession at first only covered eight boroughs. On October 7th, after a month of unprecedented civilian hell, it was extended to the County of London, though this did not include some seriously bombed dormitory areas and suburbs. By this time many of those who wanted to go had gone privately. Mr. MacDonald found the rate of official registration "disappointing." On the first day of November there were still *over a quarter of a million schoolchildren* in London.

So by the time the official scheme had really got into operation millions of people had redistributed themselves at random, voluntary evacuees from London, Liverpool, Birmingham, having penetrated to the highlands of Scotland and the cottages of Cornwall. Profiteering was frequent; 16 guineas a week asked for a Cotswold cottage, 18s. a week for a tiny bedroom in Hertfordshire, 8s. 6d. for an indifferent dinner in a West Country hotel. Billeting officers found their previous surveys were now useless; accommodation was filled up overnight by voluntary evacuees, often ready to pay more than the billeting allowance. And the flow of official evacuees was much slower than the rest. By September 20th a resident in a Western town, who had been over in France during their blitz, commented:

> This place is like Bordeaux, queues of women and children with their possessions done up in pillow-cases; nowhere to go—storming Y.W.C.A. and the buses—it's very sad.

Typical of the tangled migration which Adolf Hitler has stimulated in Britain is this picture of a Kentish town:

> First stage—influx of children and parents from London increased trade. Second stage—evacuees returning slowly to London, trade declining. Third stage—the townsfolk leaving, making trade worse. Fourth stage—coastal town residents coming into our town improved business. Fifth stage—London people coming back, *and* local people coming back. Business brisk. No houses to let despite several serious aerial attacks. Country town preferred to S.E. London, evidently. Next stage in process of development is, strangely enough, coastal town evacuees going back to *coast*, as one said, "Can't be any worse at home (Deal) than it is here!" This last stage may be accelerated as the possibility of invasion becomes less. Hop-pickers appear to be "staying on."

The confusion should not be over-estimated; where things work smoothly there isn't a noise. There has been a lot of noise about rest centres in London, which have now been enormously improved. In the reception areas there are still inferior rest centres and plenty of unsympathetic touches. At one place the rest centre is decorated with a large notice:

BEHIND EVERY SOCIAL PROBLEM
IS REVEALED
THE HIDDEN HAND OF ALCOHOL

Three weeks after the blitz, in one big reception town (7-10,000 evacuees), no special staff had been put on to collecting and filing billeting information, and the only answer to evacuee requests was, "We have nothing yet." Of course, local authorities faced a huge problem, and were often administratively and intellectually unprepared for the swarms that arrived. In many places, official treatment of evacuees became the subject of considerable criticism from the local residents. A characteristic overheard comment:

> Really, they ought to have some better provision for the refugees. Have you seen them—standing down at the Food Office and the Salvation Army for clothes? There were 2,000 of them at the Food Office. They've been waiting there hours, poor things.

And here is an early report from the rest centre of a big reception town:

> I slept the night in the cinema. It is lit by six large lights; four of these are turned off at 11 o'clock, the other two remain on all night. Firemen and nurses patrol the cinema throughout the night, the nurses tucking up children, fetching water and milk, and so on.
>
> Each family takes a small piece of ground as their own province. Some are in the orchestra pit, and are given a little privacy by the curtains in front of it. But the majority sleep in the gangways and between the seats. There are perhaps 800 in all in the cinema.
>
> All are provided with blankets and palliasses. These they park somewhere and put their belongings (mostly a change of clothing) on the seats nearby. When it is bedtime the men take off their coats, the women their overalls, and lie down. The gangways become crowded, people lying down very close to one another; *between the seats* there is perhaps an average of one person to ten seats. Here and there is a baby in his pram.
>
> There is no noise during the night except of babies crying. Nearly every mother has a small child and as soon as one cries, three or four others start too. It was quite impossible to get more than ten minutes' uninterrupted sleep.

Conditions here aroused bitter resentment both from the evacuees and from shocked residents. Many unprintable comments were recorded, and may suitably be compared with the charming version of Lady Patricia Ward on the feature page of a London newspaper:

> The East End loved it. They settled themselves down each night, on rugs and cushions and blankets along the corridors; in the day-time they sat in the tip-up seats and sent their children to play in a disused ice-rink at the back of the stage . . . and wasn't it a lovely, bright place, almost like a palace? So they told each other.

So much for the official side. At many places (e.g., Basingstoke, Hatfield) there have been excellent official efforts, efficient billeting, sympathetic follow-ups, a minimum of friction all round. But it seems, on the available evidence, that rather too much depends on the chance factor of a few really energetic and intelligent individuals, usually from the W.V.S. The purely official side of evacuation has run smoothly, but the *vastly larger* unofficial side has not.

The reception of evacuees from the hosts' side was notably better than in 1939. There was real sympathy on the part of country people, who felt that the cities had been through it, while the evacuees were more ready to make the best of things because this time they were *glad* to get away. The exaggerated stories of filthy evacuee behaviour, which did much to undermine the first scheme, were now conspicuous mainly by their absence. But the first flush of sympathy from hosts, relief from guests, does not last indefinitely. By early November, antagonisms which at first were centred more or less symbolically (particularly against richer people who were not felt to be bearing their share of the reception burden), had widened to colour a good deal of the relationship between residents and evacuees. Minor points, like the crowding of buses, and the better shopping opportunities for evacuee women with little to do, added to the irritation of residents. The conflicts of the first evacuation slowly began to grow again. These conflicts were fully analysed and described earlier this year in the evacuation reports published by the Fabian Society, Liverpool University, Mass-Observation, Lady (Ernest) Simon, Lord Derby, Dr. Susan Isaacs, the A.A.S.T.A., etc. These reports nearly all agreed on many of the points to be observed in future schemes; exceedingly little notice has been taken of any of them. Yet this time the problem is even more delicate, because a much higher proportion of evacuees are adults, who were the cause of much of the difficulty last time. It is, for instance, important to give *purpose* to evacuated adults (the children get this largely from going to school and playing). Here is a typical East End woman adrift in a beautiful country town; her husband is down for the day to settle her in:

> She stopped by the bridge and looked over towards the station, over the trees and allotments. A fine sunny morning. The road full of refugees going into town and coming back. She looked over toward the station. A train blowing steam into the air. She stopped her husband by pulling at his sleeve. Squints across the allotments, the river and fields and says to him:
>
> "It's funny, isn't it? It's different like, isn't it?"
>
> He doesn't reply. She goes on looking and says:
>
> "Yes, it's different."
>
> He says, abruptly: "You'll get used to it."

From the headmistress of a village Midland school we sniff stage two in the break up of the happy pattern in a place too far away for many adults, therefore mainly filled with official child evacuees; she says:

> So far we have had no trouble with parents of the new evacuee group as *no special trains are running yet.*

But in some places where mothers' clubs, social workers' schemes, correspondence links with the home town, and other social measures have been arranged, the most amiable conditions prevail. And there are striking instances of the way in which communities, especially small villages, have determined to make this evacuation a success. But elsewhere a history of trivial tension and gradual drift looks uncommonly like repeating itself. To the sociologist, who believes lessons can be learned and correctives applied as a result of social analysis, it is sad to see history repeat itself. Already—indeed, ever since mid-September—the drift back has begun. A lull in the raids, and up surges the thought that they won't get bad again. Back you hop. Then there are serious economic difficulties in having two home units. Emotional difficulties, too. The good wife feels guilty (or suspicious) about her husband living alone, and anxious because of communication difficulties which delay news of him. Actually, a study of husbands left behind reveals an astonishing proportion who are getting positive (though maybe temporary?) pleasure out of being bachelors for a change! For the same reasons many wives have refused to evacuate at all, or to let their children go without them. "A family should keep together in times like this," is a common attitude. And as the war looks like going on for a long time, the separation "might last for years." The simplest reason of all: "I wouldn't go. I wouldn't let that bastard turn me out of my home."

TOM HARRISSON

A LONDON DIARY

MR. LEONARD WOOLF made the revolutionary suggestion last week that Mr. Gandhi should be made Viceroy of India. How, I am asked, could a pacifist be Viceroy, even if a British Government could be found wise enough to appoint the most popular Hindu as head of India? The answer is that in the doubly impossible event of his being offered the job and accepting it, he is perfectly capable of finding good reasons for postponing his pacifism to a more convenient date—when Japan and Germany, shall we say, have been defeated by force of arms. On this matter Jawaharlal Nehru, Gandhi's greatest disciple, would find less difficulty. He is not a theoretical pacifist. And yet, Nehru has now been sentenced to four years' rigorous imprisonment on a charge of preaching pacifism. He had deliberately courted arrest, and most people had anticipated a sentence of detention. This punishment looks vindictive and may be the beginning of a more serious phase. The principle involved goes far beyond Nehru's personality. It is worth while protesting with all the vigour at our command against the suicidal and immoral policy of involving India in the war without consulting her leaders, and of refusing the collaboration Congress offered. Nehru is one of the few living men whose mind and grasp and experience qualify him for a great national leader. He combines the brilliance of Balliol with the wisdom of the East. I have never met a finer man, nor one who understands more clearly the nature of the Nazi menace. I have before me an article written by him in the *Sunday Standard* (Bombay) of August 18th in which in simple language he explains the issues before the world and the disaster a Nazi victory would be, and then deplores that Britain, which is in a position to lead, seems incapable of understanding the revolution that is happening in the world. Must we always think in terms of Empire and of our own interests when mankind is demanding a world conception? Nehru's arrest is a striking proof of our failure to rise to a colossal opportunity.

* * *

The B.B.C. was very encouraging the other day about the defences of Gibraltar. Immense new defence works had been put through during the last ten weeks. Presumably Gibraltar would now offer a strong resistance to a Nazi attack. But note this has been done only in the last ten weeks. Even now I doubt if the authorities there can bring themselves to regard Franco as a possible enemy and as for the Pétain Government, Gibraltar's share in the Dakar fiasco tells its own story. Throughout the Spanish war the Gibraltar authorities were always by instinct and habit on the side of the Axis. I recall how a friend visiting Gibraltar pointed to the great guns that overlooked the harbour—German guns. He asked one of the High-Ups there if he did not find the direction of these guns disturbing. "Oh, not at all," said the High-Up, "we know that country well, you see. They are friends of ours. Why we *hunt over that country.*"

Franco is still the "Christian gentleman," whose ideal, as Lord Halifax said last May, is Britain's ideal, he is still trusted by English gentlemen of the Imperial Policy Group as the ally of true religion against Bolshevism. I should say in all seriousness that there is more to be said for the Nazi regime which has in it some elements of progress than for the black and cruel reaction of Franco's Spain. Our allies in Spain—men who stood up to Hitler and Mussolini's bombing for nearly three years—are in Franco's gaols to the number of a million or more. They can still be on our side if we are really on the side of freedom. Here is the place to find the first million of "the hundred million allies" who are ours on the Continent "if we choose." How real the chance is in Spain you can gather from another book in that series—*A Key to Victory—Spain*, by Charles Duff (Gollancz, 2*s.* 6*d.*). Duff writes with exceptional knowledge. Throughout the Spanish war and since he has followed day by day events in Spain and published his singularly accurate conclusions and forecasts in the *Voice of Spain*. His summary of Spanish history and the documented account of the actualities of Fascist methods and of Gestapo predominance in Spain to-day would tear the veil from the eyes of anyone not blinded by the sort of class prejudice which decides that it is quite all right if the ordinary folk who fought for liberty are crushed as long as British officers can still hunt with their Fascist friends—until the German guns go off. Still, Duff asserts, still even in gaol these million political prisoners which include the cream of Liberal democratic Spain—a Spain which was beginning to think and write and come alive after centuries of clerical repression and landlords' tyranny—still these men will be pro-British if Britain means any of the things which Mr. Churchill claims on her behalf. But if we continue this disastrous policy of trusting Christian Fascists even when they are puppets of Hitler, the democratic forces in Spain will be anti-British, as well as anti-German. Then a twentieth-century Wellington will have no chance at all at Torres Vedras.

* * *

Oil has been in the news again recently, and plans are still under discussion in Bandoeng for a new oil deal between British and American oil firms and the Japanese Government. I was surprised to hear this week that on the big tankers, on which the oil supplies of this country depend, there are as many as 20,000 Chinese seamen. Their wages have always been outrageously low. But this isn't the only injustice these men suffer. If a Chinese seaman loses his life on one of these oil boats—there have been over a hundred of them drowned so far—his wife back in China is paid about £32, and that is the end of the matter. The wife of a British seaman is paid about 17*s.* a week until and unless she marries again. The newly-formed Chinese Seamen's Union in London, in co-operation with the National Union of Seamen, is demanding a more equitable compensation. They are also urging the Ministry of Shipping to pay Chinese seamen a £5 a month war risks bonus. A British seaman is paid £6 a month, and on the Dutch boats the Chinese are already paid £5. Last week, 37 of these Chinese seamen held out for this sum and the ship was unable to sail for several days. They refused a suggestion made by the Ministry that they should accept £2 a month pending negotiations. It was only when force was introduced and the landing permits of the men taken away that the ship finally sailed with 37 unwilling workers on board. But this is not the end of the matter. The Seamen's Union has, I understand, taken it up, feeling that the case of these Chinese raises a question of principle which applies equally to all the lascars and other foreign sailors on whom we depend just as much as we do on British jack tars.

* * *

Onions were selling at 1*s.* a lb. and lemons at 10*d.* each when the Ministry of Food intervened to fix maximum prices. The high prices have disappeared overnight—so have the onions and the lemons. However, there are other outlets for spare purchasing power, and the *Times*' Round-the-Shops feature is a useful guide in this matter. A pleasing choice in a comprehensive range of gold cigarette cases is an engine-turned in a barley pattern with a mussel edge. Price, £14 10*s.* Another design is an oblong box which looks neat on a bridge table. The price is £28 10*s.* Cases for men are in six sizes, from £14 10*s.* to about £60. One of the things we are fighting for is the right to go four no trumps with a £60 gold cigarette case at our elbow.

* * *

It was a good idea on the 6 o'clock news to have a broadcast from North of England shelters, where groups of people had got together to organise their communal life. I liked hearing the children doing their community song. I was the more interested because I had just done a shelter-crawl in London on one of the blackest of black nights. These were well-constructed shelters to serve new blocks of flats, but they were very cold and an unforeseen problem had arisen. The cement ceilings dripped water on to the faces of the people by night and on to the piled bedclothes by day. What is to be done about condensation? The ceilings need treating with some absorbent material, but the materials are scarce. Heating is even more difficult. In some cases a cable had been run from the flats, and electric radiators warmed and dried corners of the shelters, but I gather that to provide that type of heating generally would be very expensive, and the Council will do no more to help. Then, after stumbling over debris and round craters in the blackness and rain, we suddenly found ourselves in a social hall turned into a shelter; teas and buns and the cheerful bustle of people determined to be gay. I found myself jigging to the music as I walked, whereupon I was immediately seized by a stout woman as partner in a mock dance that nearly brings the concrete roof down. Then, by way of variety, we visited a tube. The children, there most of the day, were blissfully asleep. One elderly woman, I noticed, was lying down the stairs with three steps sticking into her sides and no bedding to take off the hardness of the stone. Well, said the shelter marshal, that was all wrong, but first come first served, and people were "selfish; they could easily move up a bit to make room for her, but they won't." He would see what he could do. I was glad next day to see the definite promise of three-tier bunks in the undergrounds. But the future lies with the communal shelter—anything from 50 to 500—where entertainment and fun are possible.

* * *

"News from Greece," snorted my friend, Colonel B., "don't you believe a word you read! I was in Crete in '97 and '98, and I know. The Turks had knocked spots off the Greeks, and the Powers which were blockading Crete devised a compromise settlement. We all know the idea—that Prince George of Greece was to be the Governor under the nominal sovereignty of Turkey. All the Cretans were in suspense waiting for this solution, which would, in fact, save them from Turkish rule. On Christmas Eve I met a clever Greek insurgent leader who was acting as correspondent to a paper in Athens. He was coming out of the telegraph office. He explained that he had just wired a message to Athens. Whatever had he found to say? 'Oh, I told them that Prince George had just arrived here!' 'But, I said, 'he hasn't.' 'No,' he said, 'and he won't. But I wanted to send them a Christmas present to cheer them up.' 'Won't you get the sack?' I said. 'Lord, no,' he replied, 'they will be delighted.' And so they were. I've never trusted Greek news since. And it was just the same, they say, during the Trojan war."

* * *

The Bishop of Oxford is another cleric who believes that we are so busy fighting for our lives that we have no time to think of war aims. But how annoyed bishops usually become with the layman who says that he is so occupied with the affairs of this world that he has no time to think of the next. CRITIC

THIS ENGLAND

Our prize of 5/- for the contribution at the head of this column goes this week to G. B. Ballantine.

All cuttings should be addressed to "This England," c/o The Cornwall Press, Paris Garden, Stamford Street, S.E.1.

Distinguished couple wish to be received as paying guests by intelligent people in modern country house (possibly central heating) for longer period at reasonable terms; opportunity bridge essential, possibly tennis or golf.—*Times* Personal Column.

It seems incredible that, under existing black-out conditions, performing lion shows should be allowed in the evenings in our villages.—Letter in *Leicester Mercury*.

Sylvia Countess Poulett (60), described as independent, of London, was fined £5 at Harrogate yesterday for showing a light from her bedroom at an hotel. Police-Sergeant Haig said that when he interviewed Lady Poulett on Sept. 8th she explained that the light had been left on in her room so that her little dachshund could eat its supper.—*Sunderland Echo*.

St. Paul's Cathedral badly damaged, and now the Middle Temple. I say destroy Cologne Cathedral; bomb St. Peter's, Rome; let the Fleet bombard Genoa and destroy men, women and children, and marble palaces.—Letter from Rev. S. F. Cottam in *Oxford Mail*.

Those who prate about a better social order after the war are talking mischievous nonsense. However the war ends, we shall be an impoverished nation. We shall all have to work harder and spend less.—Dean Inge in *Evening Standard*.

A LANDS COMMISSION

We have reaped our first war harvest, won, in large measure, from newly broken ground. It has been a great harvest, born of much hectic endeavour and of a grand cereal year. As to whether we should be satisfied or not must, I think, depend upon a just estimate of the seriousness of the food situation on the one hand and on the other upon a proper appreciation of the scope that exists for increased food production in this country—and also whether there are grounds for fear about the future of the acres that have contributed to the present harvest.

The Prime Minister has left us in no doubt about the seriousness of the position. Manifestly, we can afford to take no chances, and must not rob 1942 for the benefit of 1941; no more than we dare rob, shall we say? 1945 for the benefit of 1944: for never let us forget that the soil is a "gift which is duty-laden" to a degree greater than any other raw material. We may, by misadventure or lack of forethought, waste steel, but in the wasting we shall not ruin or render unproductive the ores still to be won from the earth's crust. Not so with any mishandling of the soil, for it may take years to set aright the ill-practices of but a single year.

I am greatly privileged amongst men, for few people have had the same opportunities that I have during the past two years of forming a just estimate of the present condition and of the potentialities of the lands of Britain. It has been my lot to conduct a survey of the grasslands of England and Wales for the Ministry of Agriculture, and for many years I have been fortunate enough to be closely associated with pioneering and land-improving farmers; while all my own work has been devoted to a single end—land improvement. My verdict, then, should, I think, be taken seriously, and the truth is that a huge acreage of the farm lands of this country is in a sorry plight—in a plight demanding more than heroic efforts by farmers, many of whom are ill-equipped to perform the tasks demanded by the lands they occupy.

The present harvest, then, and the two million acres already broken, should only be regarded as quite a small beginning, and in some respects a rather dangerous beginning. Small, because, to my own certain knowledge, in England and Wales there remain at least another seven million acres of poorish-to-very-poor permanent grass that as acres can never be made fully productive unless brought under the plough. Dangerous, because, in the interests of the soil, which demands above all things a balanced husbandry—and that is to say in the interests of 1942 and onwards—it is dangerous to embark upon a wholesale ploughing-up campaign unless that campaign is supported by a well-considered cropping plan.

In my view, our endeavours up to date teach two lessons. We dare not struggle on without a real long-term agricultural policy for this country, and we shall have to set up some quite special organisation and machinery to deal with the more hopelessly derelict of our derelict acres.

All the price-fixing in the world can never, of itself, constitute an enduring agricultural policy, for the simple reason that, no matter how generous or how well thought-out the prices, prices alone and as such can never ensure that proper care is taken of the land. Policy must be such as will ensure proper and fertility-sustaining rotations everywhere. Policy, therefore, must necessarily be regional in its incidence, and should be sensitively conscious of the interdependence of the husbandry of one district on that of another. Policy must make a judicious balance between commodities which easily dissipate fertility—wheat, milk and potatoes, for example—and those which tend to enhance soil-fertility—sheep, pigs, poultry and fatting beasts, for example. Within exceedingly wide limits, the more of the latter we can carry, the more of the former shall we be able to produce.

Since we have never attempted a long-term agricultural policy, based primarily on the needs of the land, even if we tried we could hardly hope to formulate a perfect policy at a stroke of the pen. We should, however, be feeling our way into such a policy as a necessary wartime measure, the first step in which would be to formulate a cropping plan for the acres broken from grass, and as a part of that plan to decide and then to announce the annual increments still to be broken. We do not want to have the whole of England in roots in any one year, nor do we want hopelessly to crop out the fields we have broken, and as we plough up grass, so must we remake grass—now in terms of leys. Unless we do have a cropping plan, we bid fair to flounder badly, and for one thing, shall not have the seeds we want when we want them.

The business of redeeming derelict land and reclaiming waste must necessarily be a long-term affair, though food—perhaps potatoes, perhaps stock-feed, it matters not which—can to-day be produced in abundance from such land at the first attack. Derelict land, with its broken-down fences, lack of water for drinking, need of drainage and oft-times hunger for lime, can only be tackled profitably and advantageously on a sinking fund basis, and may require anything up to seven, ten or fifteen years to pay off the outgoings with adequate interest. Things have come to such a pass that this is now a job that only the State can tackle.

I would advocate what I have long ago advocated, but now with an altogether deeper conviction. I would substitute for the Forestry Commission a "Lands Commission." The new commission, which should include men representing the very best amongst our land-improving pioneers and practical farmers, at the outset would be given a double term of reference: the redemption of derelict land for agricultural purposes and afforestation. To put both functions under one and the same commission would go far to eliminate the afforestation of land that were better put into agriculture heart, and should go far to co-ordinate in every way the needs of the farmer and of the forester. Like the Forestry Commission, the new commission would purchase land outright or take on a 99-years lease. Some legislation would be necessary to give the commission rights of compulsory purchase, to safeguard reasonableness of price and to hasten the normal machinery for taking possession. I would have the commission completely restore the derelict lands, build the necessary cottages and other buildings, and farm the various lands until the several sinking funds had been paid off. Then the lands in question could either be sold or let off to worthy tenants. The commission would be set a per annum quota of land for purchase and redemption and financed accordingly.

The new machinery would, I am convinced, be welcomed by the War Agricultural Committees, for at present the worst derelict land hangs like millstones round their necks. The Forestry Commission makes far better use of technical and expert knowledge than at present is made of the much greater volume of technical knowledge at the service of agriculture. With a proper system of regional, divisional and local officers, all sound practical technicians, the new commission, should ensure that everything were done properly, expeditiously and economically. Again, the commission would ensure the use of modern machinery and implements to maximum advantage. The land-reclaiming implements and a large proportion of the harvesting implements would always be moving on, for on many types of land the first harvest would be taken from a much larger acreage than would normally be devoted to corn. Idle tractor hours, the bugbear of profitable mechanisation, should be practically eliminated.

The setting-up of a Lands Commission such as I have postulated would prove beyond all doubt that the State really was interested in agricultural development and in the land, and it would carry far and wide large-scale demonstrations in the art of land redemption and in the arts of high farming based equally on scientific knowledge, technical proficiency and mechanisation, while at the moment, most important of all, it would lead to the immediate production of food in large quantities on land now virtually producing nothing.

R. George Stapledon

GETTING ONE'S HAIR CUT

Being in a small town the other morning for the purpose of having my hair cut, I went, as a preliminary, into the bar of a charming-looking hotel. As I was sipping what might be called my "elevenses," the local siren went off. "There he goes," said the barmaid with a laugh of resignation, and she called through a doorway to some one invisible: "Mother, did you hear him?" (It was the first time I had heard a siren referred to as belonging to the male sex.) As I was anxious to get my hair-cut over, I asked her whether the shops shut during air-alerts. "No, not now," she said, wiping a beer-stain from the bar with a wet cloth. "Of course, they won't let you stay in the streets. You see, there have been so many aeroplanes brought down here. It's too dangerous."

An elderly gentleman with a red moustache turned almost grey, a hooked pipe in his mouth and gold-rimmed spectacles fixed round his ears, was sitting with his wife at a small table beside the bar. He asked the barmaid where exactly the bombs had fallen on the town during the previous night. He said that he himself had heard two or three whistling just over his roof. "Ah," she said, "when you hear then whistling, you know you're all right. A bomb never whistles till it has got past you. The air holds the sound. You see what I mean?" He nodded as if he saw, but I felt sure he understood the barmaid's science as little as I did. "It's the bomb you don't hear," she went on, "that may get you"; and she laughed heartily at the notion. The elderly gentleman did not laugh in response. He merely pulled at his pipe and nodded gravely. "I see," he said.

Despite what the barmaid had said about the streets being cleared, they seemed to me to be no less crowded than usual when I went out in search of the barber's shop. Girls were talking on the pavements. Mothers were walking with their children. The siren might as well not have shrieked for all the effect it had on the life of the town. I thought to myself selfishly: "At least the barber's will be fairly empty. Nobody will be being shaved, at any rate. No sane man would sit back with a razor at his throat during a possible air raid." I had always thought, indeed, that to be shaved and to be sitting in a dentist's chair during an air raid were experiences that none but the most heroic would dare to face. I have been shaved during a thunderstorm by a foreign barber who leaped into the air at every flash of lightning, and to be shaved during an air raid must be even more terrifying than that.

The barber's shop, however, was crowded. All the seats were occupied, and there were even men waiting at the doors. There were five barbers hard at work shearing the backs of the heads of men and boys as close as if they had been sheep. The operation with the clippers took only a few minutes. As one small boy, clipped almost bald, rose from his chair, the barber said to him jocularly: "When you came in, I thought you were wearing a fur-coat. Nobody can say you're wearing a fur-coat now." Certainly nobody could. All that natural collar of hair at the base of the skull had vanished, leaving the boy merely with a badly-shaped billiard ball on his shoulders.

As the vehement clipping went on, the barbers and their patients talked about bombs, as the saying goes, with great interest and apathy. Anybody who could correct anybody else as to the exact position at which a bomb had fallen during the previous night was regarded—and regarded himself—as a successful conversationalist. You might have thought you were listening to an interchange of experiences by men who had spent an afternoon at a football match. As I listened to the talk and meditated on the lack of malice with which they spoke of the bombing of their town, a man sat down in one of the chairs and asked for a shave. Ah, I thought, one of the heroes. Then another man succeeded to an empty chair, and he, too, was soon having his face lathered for the razor. Another chair became vacant, and an old clergyman, so frail that a barber had to take his arm and guide him to the seat, subsided into it. He also wanted a shave. I realised then that the heroism of men who cannot shave themselves and who are in need of a shave is not to be quenched by a mere threat that the skies may fall.

The old clergyman, having exchanged the conventional gossip about bombs with his barber, began to talk about various narrow escapes he had had during his life. "I'm an old man," he said, "and, looking back over my life, I seem to have had a marvellous number of narrow escapes. I have been shipwrecked," he said with a boastful smile. "I have been run down three times by motor cars." "Well I never," said the barber. "Oh, yes," said the old man, smiling through the soap; "two or three hospital cases." "Well I never," said the barber. "The last time," said the clergyman, "they thought I was done for—a fractured skull—but"—with a beatific expression—"I wasn't. No, I got through all right, and I don't know whether you have ever been run down by a motor car or not, but, if you haven't I can assure you it's a much less terrifying experience than you would imagine." The barber, sharpening his razor, nodded his acceptance of the clergyman's word on the matter. "The fact is," chuckled the old man, "though I have been run down by motor cars three times I didn't remember on any of the three occasions a single thing about it." "Well I never," repeated the barber admiringly.

"And then," went on the old clergyman, warming to his work, "I was nearly drowned when skating. Fell through the ice when I was skating on a deep lake. Luckily, when I was a boy, my brother and I used to bathe in a river near our home, and, as we used to amuse ourselves by diving for stones at the bottom of the river, I had learned to see under water. So, when I fell through the ice, I didn't lose my head but opened my eyes, and looked round. I saw a bright light and I said to myself 'That's the hole I've just fallen through.' Then I swam strongly towards it, caught the edge of the ice, popped my head out of the hole and was rescued. Oh," he said, laughingly, "I have had some narrow escapes, I can tell you." "You certainly have, sir," said the barber.

The rest of the saga of his narrow escapes I could not unfortunately hear clearly, for my own time for the shears had come. Still, beyond the voice of my barber I could get an occasional snatch of a story which seemed to tell how the clergyman in early life had been a boxer and of some adventure he had had with a professional pugilist who was both a crook and a dipsomaniac. So far as I could gather, the pugilist when in a state bordering on delirium tremens had called round on the clergyman and threatened to take his life. The clergyman, however, being sober and light of foot, had got in a knock-out blow that laid the bully flat till the police arrived. "You were one too many for him, sir," said the barber admiringly. "Yes," agreed the clergyman, pleased by the compliment, "but I always regard that as one of my narrow escapes." The barber puffed some powder on to his face. The old man rose from his chair. The All Clear sounded. "Is that the All Clear?" asked the old man. "Yes, sir," said the barber. "Dear, dear," said the old man; "what a bore it all is!"

I returned to the bar of the hotel to meet a friend who was to give me a lift home. The elderly man in gold-rimmed spectacles was sitting with a more elongated face than before and the barmaid was still apparently talking to him about bombs. "You should have heard the eerie sound of the whoof," she said to him. He looked as though he were not sorry to have missed the eerie sound of the whoof. A tall man with a glass of beer in his hand was telling—probably not for the first time—how his son had escaped from Dunkirk. "I saw it in a teacup," he said. "We heard no news of him for days and one day I said to my pal, 'The boy's all right. I've seen it in a teacup.' And, the next thing I knew, the boy was home." One of the company to whom he had been telling the story of divination by tea-leaves said good-bye and went out; and some one echoed: "He was through the last war, wasn't he?" "Well," said the tall man, with a smile, "he was and he wasn't. He was in the Army, but he could do nothing right so they never sent him to France, but kept him doing odd jobs in the awkward squad in England. No," he added, his smile broadening, "George could never do anything right, as a soldier. They say he once got on to a horse back to front."

In another group a young airman was talking enthusiastically about Spitfires. "A lovely machine," he said. "Like a graceful bird. No matter what new inventions there are, I don't think they'll ever do away with the Spitfire." Some one asked him: "What about these new aeroplanes that are said to be so fast that they make a Spitfire look as if it was flying backwards?" "Well," said the airman, "my theory is that there's a limit to speed. If aeroplanes go much faster, it seems to me, they'll create a vacuum behind them and be sucked back into it and crash." "I don't understand science," said a friend who was with him; "I almost failed to get into the Air Force because, when they asked me what a rectangle was, I said it was an angle of 180 degrees. . . ."

I was puzzling my brains to think what was wrong with this answer when my friend with the car arrived. After we had been driving for a little way, I suddenly exclaimed: "I know. It's an angle of 90 degrees." "What are you talking about?" my friend asked. "I've just remembered," I told him, "what a rectangle is." Y. Y.

DIGGING FOR MRS. MILLER

Miss Sterling said: "Post D has rung through to say that you are to go to Slaney F at 8.0. They have more incidents than they can cope with."

Ford had been on from 4.0 a.m. to 6.0 a.m., and was lying by. The light of Miss Sterling's torch woke him. He disentangled his slept-in clothes from the blankets and mattress on the basement floor of the sub-post. He swilled water over his face, finding it cold out of the hot tap. Apparently the gas had gone again in the night. He took a bus down the Queens Road to the next A.R.P. district, Slaney. When he got to the Slaney F Post the Senior Warden was out; fetched, he hesitated between various tasks. Then Rumbold, another Post D Warden came. Finally they were both told to go down to Beaton Street.

A bomb, or bombs, had hit the last five houses in Beaton Street, where it joins the river, and a small tenement that forms the last block on the embankment. These buildings had been destroyed. Where they had stood there was a crater, with two mounds of debris on each side of it, one some 25 feet, and the other some 15 feet, high. The debris of the five houses and the tenement was completely mixed in the mounds; there was no trace of separate structures.

Ford and Rumbold found rescue squads working on each mound. After wandering about a little they found the Warden in charge. He seemed unable to think of anything he wanted done. "Just keep them from coming down the streets," he said. He evidently felt vaguely that it must be right to stop people doing something. But nobody was coming down the streets. Between ten and twenty oldish men and women, and one or two untidy girls were standing about in the doors and on the area steps of the more or less shattered, but still standing, houses round the incident.

Ford and Rumbold saw no one to stop doing anything; so they just waited about. It was a squally October morning. As usual on the embankment, you suddenly became conscious of the weather, almost as if you had been in the country. The tide was low: gulls stood on the mud flats. The wind flickered the surface of the channel. A biggish collier, looking inappropriate so far up the river, was moored fifty yards farther on beside the Power Station. The Power Station's chimneys stood over them. People glanced at them, and then at the mounds.

Ford began watching what the rescue squad on the nearest mound was doing. They had evidently been at work for some hours already. They had fixed a plank walk up the side of the mound, and a knot of them was concentrated near the top, apparently moving the debris about with their hands, and putting bits of it into wicker baskets. When the baskets were filled they took them to other parts of the mound and emptied them. It looked aimless. Ford climbed on to the debris to try to see what they were at. As soon as he got on to the mound he found that it was made up of an extraordinary texture of brick and plaster rubble, more or less shattered lengths of floor joists and beams, pieces of broken furniture, rugs, carpets, linoleum, curtains, pieces of crockery, often unbroken, all made into a homogeneous, tight pressed pudding. It was rather difficult to climb up on to.

When Ford got to the top he was gradually able to make out what the rescue squad was doing. They were sinking a small shaft vertically downwards through the mound from its top. They worked much in the same way as archaeologists open up the debris of millenia; but this was the debris of seconds. The rescue men had blue overalls and white steel helmets, instead of the brown overalls and black helmets of the Wardens, such as Ford was wearing. The Rescue men took no notice of him. They had only sunk their shaft about 5 feet down into the mound. They seemed to Ford to be working in an incredibly primitive and inefficient way—with their bare hands, and without any tools even, let alone any mechanical appliances.

One of them began to let himself down into the shaft, which was encumbered by ragged ends of floor joists and beams. He got to the bottom and then wormed his body round till he was lying in a knot with his head down by a crack, where some tattered rubble was held up an inch or so by a joist end. Ford moved to the edge of the shaft to see. The Rescue men stood still, and one of them called down to the people by the mound to be quiet. Ford heard the river waves lap the mud. The Rescue man down the shaft put his mouth to the crack and said: "Are you there, chum?" Everybody kept really still. But they heard nothing. The man down the shaft put his ear to the crack. The Rescue man at the top, who had called to the people to be quiet, said: "Can't you hear him any more, Smith?" Smith said: "Yes, but he's getting very faint." Then he began to get out of the shaft. It was 9.30 a.m. Ford had not realised before that there were people alive under them in the mound.

The Rescue squad went on digging, no faster but steadily, filling wicker baskets with rubble, passing them from hand to hand to the edge of the mound and emptying them.

The one who called down to the people to be quiet said: "Cut away some of that stuff," pointing to one edge of the shaft, "the weight'll be coming down on Smith otherwise." A couple of Rescue men took up shovels and began trying to use them on that edge of the mound, pushing rubble down into the central crater. Ford felt restless. He saw a pick lying about, so he took off his coat, put down his gas mask and torch, and began to loosen the rubble so that the men with shovels could really get at it. The Rescue men neither warned him off—as he feared they might—nor welcomed him. Rumbold came and worked with another shovel.

For about a foot down his pick made good progress; it was easy to loosen the broken brickwork, plaster, and the rest of the indescribable mixture of which the mound was made. Then his pick stuck in something tough and sticky. Using all his strength, he got it out. At the next stroke it stuck again. He got it out. Forewarned, he made smaller strokes, only attempting to loose tiny bits of the new material. He wondered what it was. He picked a bit up in his hands, and recognised it as the clay which is the universal sub-soil of London. If you dig down, say, 10 feet almost anywhere in London this is what you come to. But he was working more than 10 feet above street level. The bomb had picked up layers of the sub-soil and somehow spread them above the layers of obliterated houses.

After some little time the Rescue man who had put them on, who was evidently called Frank, said, "That's enough." Ford was glad. His arms ached, and he had very slightly scorched his hand the night before, having been clumsy in putting out an incendiary; the pick rubbed it. But he didn't fancy standing about. So he got a place taking the filled baskets as the men in the shaft passed them out to be emptied. The Rescue men still neither welcomed nor repulsed him. He could now see that their apparently primitive method of work with their hands was in fact the only possible way of dealing with the material of which the mound was made. It would have been quite impossible to swing a pick or shovel in the shaft, partly because it was too narrow. But even if they had dug it wider, as soon as you got a few feet down a network of half-shattered woodwork would have prevented the use of any tool which Ford could think of. As it was, they were continually having to stop to saw through a wedged joist or beam. They used absurdly small, flimsy saws—they looked as if they had been bought at toy shops, and perhaps they had—in order to be able to get them into the corners of the shaft.

They began to smell gas—not poison gas, but ordinary domestic gas. As the shaft progressively opened up the mound, the shattered gas pipes of the houses permeated it with gas. "Nobody must strike a match," said Frank. But the Rescue men went on smoking just the same.

Every now and then a Rescue man would call out "Warden," and Ford or Rumbold would go over and take charge of some bit of personal property that had been unearthed. Ford got several pots and pans, a china dish, unchipped even, two ration books in the names of Andrews and Miller, and a lady's handbag, undamaged and full of its owner's make-up equipment. When he had collected a small heap of these he took them over to a partly ruined, but still standing house on the other side of the street. Here a dump of miscellaneous and trivial possessions had been established. A man, a boy in his teens, and a girl who was crying a little, stood in the doorway of this house. Ford was surprised to see them, because the police had twice moved away onlookers from under this house, owing to the evident danger of more of it falling down. As Ford put down his handful of dust-encrusted possessions, the man said: "Don't matter about those. What I want you to get out is my boy." Ford didn't say anything. "Is there any hope--for him?" said the man, jerking his head towards the mound, and speaking more gently. "I don't know," Ford said, shaking his head. He went back to the mound. "Is it a boy under there?" he said to one of the rescue men. "Lad of about fifteen, we're told. Some say there's two, some says there's three of them," he replied.

Smith wormed his way down again to the bottom of the shaft, which was now several feet deeper. He put his mouth to another and larger crack, and said rather softly, "You there, chum?" Again they were silent, while Smith put his ear to the crack, screwing up his face at the stench of the gas. After a little he began to worm up again. "Can't hear nothing now," he said.

They went on filling the wicker baskets. The morning wore on. Once a doctor came. Work on the shaft was stopped and Frank and Smith, who were in it, came out. But the doctor couldn't see what was below the bottom of the shaft any better than they could. He stood quite still, peering down it—a big, very well turned out man, with a spotless mackintosh and black soft hat, and a rather arrogant face. There was a point in the doctor's *tenue* amidst the encrusted grime of the rest of them, Ford noticed. It actually did give confidence. However, the doctor said nothing and went away.

Frank said, "Warden, telephone for a mobile canteen." Rumbold went to the nearest telephone box and got through to the Town Hall. About half an hour later a canteen, drawn by a private car, arrived. After that the Rescue men, and everybody else, went to it for a cup of tea at intervals.

The sirens went. The next arrival was a smallish, quick-moving man who said, "Where's my rabbits?" He received no answer. "Four I 'ad," he said, "kept 'em in the Anderson, and this morning I saw two of 'em up the top of Beaton Street." Ford wondered if his Warden's training should have included elementary rabbit catching. But one of the Rescue men said unexpectedly that he had seen a rabbit on the embankment. "There," said the small man, "how they do stray!"

But he didn't demand that the wardens should institute a hunt. He wanted to talk. "It's my belief," he said, "that this 'ere was done by one of them 'igh explosive bombs." Frank said, his face not moving a muscle, "You may be right at that, chum." But irony was lost on the rabbit keeper. He nodded his head. "'igh explosive," he said. "I was up the other end of the street with my lad Bert, and Bert had just said 'Good-night' to this poor lad here underneath, when it comes down. Bert was blown through the door of No. 12

and I were blown through No. 11. 'Come on, Bert,' I says, and we went down to the shelter to find the Missus and my little boy Sam, what I couldn't send away on account of his 'ealth. When we got there the Anderson wasn't to be seen under earth and bricks. But we soon found it, and tapped on the steel. As soon as they 'eard us, my little boy Sam, what we 'ad to keep here on account of his 'ealth, calls out, 'Come on, Dad, be quick and take this earth off.' So Bert and I digs 'em out, and not a penny the worse they were." Ford said nothing. The rabbit keeper went off.

The morning wore on. The "All Clear" went. The shaft was imperceptibly deepened. The gas stank. An ambulance drove up. The driver came up and asked Ford where she was to park it. Ford said, "I'm afraid you won't be wanted." The driver said, "Oh," but she backed the ambulance up to the mound.

Ford spent some time taking an old lady, who was pretty badly shocked, to the Post. The old lady was shaking all over and kept repeating, "Find me somewhere to go before to-night: before to-night: before to-night." Ford put the First Aid people on to her; they were glad to have something to do, and finally took the old lady off to hospital.

Ford went back to the mound and emptied more baskets. Smith and Frank could now both work at the bottom. It was now 12.0 noon. Frank said to Smith, "You're finished. Go up and have a cup of tea at the mobile." Smith came up, all in. Ford talked to him while he stood on the mound. "Do you think they can still be alive?" he asked. "No," said Smith. Then Smith said to Ford and Rumbold, "I wish other bloody civilians helped like you." Ford was shocked to hear Wardens called civilians by a Rescue man. But he appreciated a compliment from Smith.

The other Rescue men went on filling baskets. The shaft got lower. It was about 10 feet deep now. The atmosphere of the group working round it began to change. Everyone began peering at the bottom of the shaft. But there was still only the rubble, the bits and bats of broken furniture, the joists and beams, the twisted gas and water pipes, to see. Then Frank and the Rescue man who had taken Smith's place straightened up, stopped filling, and looked round. Ford peered at the bottom of the shaft. There seemed to be nothing there except one more greyish-yellow joist, which ended in a curiously grooved knob. But after looking at it for some time Ford saw that it was a rubble-coated fist and an arm, bare to the elbow. It seemed far too big a hand for a boy of fifteen. The Rescue men filled a few more baskets with rubble from the very bottom of the shaft and sawed through several more joist ends. They uncovered a large, untorn and apparently new, though intensely grimy, blanket. Ford noticed that it had a narrow light blue stripe in it at the ends, exactly like the one on his own camp bed at the post. So that's what it would have looked like if "he" had let go his stick ten seconds earlier, flying East to West, or ten seconds later, flying West to East, he thought.

A smallish man in brown plus-fours with no uniform, nor badge, nor armlet of any description appeared. Frank and the other Rescue men called him, "Sir."

"How are they lying?" he said. "Directly at the bottom here, Sir," said Frank.

"Well, get them out then; what are you waiting for?" said the man in plus-fours, sharply. But the Rescue men did not want to pull off the blanket at once. They moved about, collected their saws, took off their gloves, wiped their faces. Smith came back from the canteen. He looked down the shaft. "Which way are they lying, Frank?" he said. "Head here, legs here, body bent round here," said Frank. "Very awkward," said Smith. Then he got down the shaft again and pulled off the blanket. Ford could not instantly see anything underneath it except a good deal of white and red, and a good deal of white and blue, striped material. Then he realised that these were the pyjamas of two bodies, lying face down, on top of each other, or, rather, with their arms and legs intermingled both with each other, and with the network of boards, joists, bits of bedsteads, and the omnipresent rubble, which made up the bottom of the shaft. There was no blood nor gross mutilation. But the bodies had become part of the debris; they had become one constituent of the many constituents of the mound. They had been crushed and pressed into the decomposed raw material of the five houses. Like the clay of the London sub-soil, their clay, now quiet, had lost its individual existence and become indissolubly a part of its environment.

"Well, get them out; come on!" said the man in plus-fours again. But again the Rescue men paused. Then Frank took hold of the edge of the white and red material, and pulled an arm up from under the two bodies. He began putting this arm down beside the white and red material, straightening it. He had to use a good deal of force. "None too soon," said Smith, noticing this. His meaning was that they would never have got the bodies out of the narrow shaft if they had had time to stiffen thoroughly. Gradually the contours of human forms began to take shape as Frank folded arms and legs down besides the main mass of white and red, and white and blue, pyjamas.

"Now lift, get on with it," said the man in plus-fours. Frank and Smith got their arms under the main white and red mass and lifted. Immediately the two bodies became distinguishable from each other by their outlines instead of merely by the colour of their pyjamas. Ford saw that they were those of a woman, in the white and red, and a man in the white and blue, pyjamas. The bodies had been driven, whether by the blast itself or by the falling debris, not only into the material of the houses, but also into each other. They were locked in a reluctant intercourse. Frank and Smith got the woman's body a couple of feet up. But they could not move it any farther; so they put it down again. Frank took up one wrist, round which was an identity disc. "Mrs. Miller," he read off. Mrs. Miller had been a very big, strong, and vigorous woman.

"Get a rope," said the man in plus-fours. When the rope came Frank took it. "Pass it under the buttocks," said the man in plus-fours. With some difficulty they did. "Now pass the blanket under her," he ordered. Ford noticed that he seemed to know his business. "Now raise her." Frank and Smith got their arms under her again and pushed upwards. Mrs. Miller's body seemed to loll for a moment on the blanket. Her black hair was mingled and matted with the brick rubble. Her face was covered thick with it, like an actress in her dressing-room, taking her make-up off with cleansing cream. She bled a little at the mouth, as her head sagged.

"Cover her up," said the man in plus-fours. They got the blanket wrapped over her as well as under her. "Heave on the rope and pull the corners of the blanket." Ford got on to a ledge halfway down the shaft and took the weight of one corner of the blanket. Two men pulled on the rope. Gradually Mrs. Miller's heavy body came up. They had a light metal stretcher ready at the top of the mound and put her down on to it.

The sirens went. They straightened themselves and looked up, before tackling the man's body. Before the sirens stopped they heard 'planes. A gun or two wuffed. One cracked nearer. Between two clouds they saw the raiding squadron pass, high, aloof, preoccupied, flying fast across the river to the South. The stretcher party began to carry the body down from the mound. There was a heavy thump as a big bomb fell somewhere South of the river. The mound shuddered. So they took Mrs. Miller away, and the sounds of the new raid were her only requiem.

Ford stayed to help get the man's body out of the shaft. When they had done so Smith said to him, "It's a funny thing, but you hardly ever find what you're looking for at this game. I expect that lad who was talking is in another part of the mound altogether. Dead, of course, by now. Shouldn't wonder if they all died of the gas in the end. Hope so. It's quietest that way." It was 1 o'clock and another Warden came down from the Post to relieve Ford. So he went home to wash. He found two people whom he had asked to lunch just going away, after waiting for him for half an hour. He washed, got out of his uniform, and they all went out to lunch at a restaurant in Soho. Ford thought that this was the first peculiar thing that had happened that morning.

JOHN STRACHEY

CZECH AUTUMN

In my own country, now the horses mark
the furrows out; the mountain-ash weeps blood;
and on a ragged rose at twilight sings
an unmelodious and lonely bird.

Earth's wounds and wrinkles are kept warm
under dead leaves by kindly winds blown down.
A flock of ravens, flown down on a field,
claws gripping clay, from plough-troughs sip the rain.

At sunset, farmers stroll across their land
crumbling a handful of the precious soil,
and mumbling prayers; or mutely wondering
with what green wealth the Spring their fields will fill.

Then, from a helmet once by plough upturned,
now water-scoop, the men all drink in turn;
while housewives out upon their doorsteps come
to watch the night's first stars sparkle and shine.

DAVID GASCOYNE
(Translated from the Czech of Victor Fischl)

PLAYS AND PICTURES

"Pride and Prejudice," at the Empire.

" It was in Old England," began the film of *Pride and Prejudice*, with a touch of the silent days, and one dreaded more in the way of prettiness than Jane Austen ever suffered. The dresses *are* a little flouncy and grand, with waists and leg-of-mutton sleeves and wide skirts so that the young ladies can run without showing their toes; Mr. Collins has been unfrocked, for greater gaiety; Lady Catherine is now a hippogriff from the *ancien régime*, who after her visit to Elizabeth relents as she enters her carriage and blesses the union she came to break; Kitty and Lydia are shown tipsy as well as lightheaded; Mary is a spectacled buffoon, Elizabeth points her wit with some straight shooting at archery; Lydia returns from her elopement in a coach attended by trumpeters and braided footmen; these and other efforts at caricature will very properly appal the Janeites. They are not, it must be admitted, improvements. But as films go, and as the treatment of classics goes, *Pride and Prejudice* comes out pretty well. Olivier makes a fine contemptuous, gradually unbending D'Arcy, Greer Garson captures most of Elizabeth and spellbinds with her own strange good looks, Edmund Gwen as Mr. Bennett has the best lines, which he speaks whimsically instead of cynically, and yet they bite. Jane Austen's tone has quite or almost gone; but it's rather difficult to think of any filming of her book that would be otherwise.

The London Group

The London Group at the Cooling Galleries carries on admirably, but without advancing. It is something that the pictures should have been painted at all, but is not nearly enough. Tristram Hillyer ruins the whole of one wall by his *Fin de Saison*. This picture, extremely professional, beautifully composed, admirably painted, is an imposition on the well-meaning English flooziness all round it. It is the best thing there. There is a feeble Duncan Grant, two bad Klees by John Tunnard, a delicious Alison Debenham (*The Valley*, downstairs) an opulent Mathew Smith, a portrait of Pissarro by Ethel Walker, and a great deal of rubbish. Dunlop's little *Street in Leatherhead* is gay, his big pictures uninspiring. Pasmore has a rather sloppy portrait, and a dab at a Renoir with his *Roses*. D. Dawnay's *Skaters in Regent's Park* is promising, but surely the Coldstream criss-cross, those pencilled squares which are the badge of honest Fitzroy Street craftsmanship, should be taken out, however reassuring. Raymond Coxon's North Wales is impressive, and Barry Craig's *Concarnean Harbour* shows a healthy Christopher Wood influence. Nicolette Macnamara paints with a feeling for people. Kapp's flower piece has sensibility. But this is an English exhibition with a vengeance. A vengeance that has been too long delayed.

THE COMING WEEK

SATURDAY, November 9th—
  Fabian Society Lecture, G. D. H. Cole: " A Socialist Civilisation," Central Hall, 2.15.
  Concert in aid of Langham Voluntary Service, Clifford Curzon and Stephen Waters, Caxton Hall, 2.30. Admission 1*s*.
SUNDAY, November 10th—
  C. E. M. Joad: " Time and Immortality," Conway Hall, 11.
  Public meeting organised by the Forward Movement of the P.P.U., Conway Hall, 3.
MONDAY, November 11th—
  Fabian Society International Affairs Group Snack Lunch, Dr. V. Cornea: " The Balkan Crisis," 12 Gt. Newport Street, W.C.2, 1.
WEDNESDAY, November 13th—
  M. André Labarthe: " La Science et la Technique en France," Institut Français, 3.

Correspondence

STILL BLIND

SIR,—*Not a single German or Austrian political refugee who has applied for release from internment under category 19 of the White Paper has so far been released.* How is this to be explained?

The tribunals which classified the German and Austrian refugees into " A," " B " and " C," at the outbreak of the war, had a definite tendency to regard the non-political refugee as more reliable than the political refugee. Then came general internment, the deportation of friendly aliens—amongst them a number of well-known anti-Fascists—the sinking of the *Arandora Star,* the revelations of the conditions in the internment camps; all leading up to the public outcry in July and August last against the policy of general internment. A variety of arguments were then put forward against the policy of the Government, but the basis of the reaction against general internment was the feeling that to keep active anti-Nazi fighters, the first victims of Hitler, behind barbed wires was absurd when we were telling the world that we are fighting Nazism.

Sir John Anderson had to bow to the public demand for a change in the Government's policy. He admitted mistakes and promised the release of certain groups of internees.

This " change " in the Home Secretary's policy—made under the pressure of public opinion demanding the release of the anti-Fascist political refugees—was laid down in the first White Paper published in July. It contained 18 categories of persons eligible for release from internment. There was, however, no category for political refugees at all. No provision was made for those about whose internment the public storm had broken out.

At that time the Press and those members of Parliament who had taken an active interest in the refugee question were still vigilant and active enough to insist on further concessions. Therefore in August the Home Secretary was compelled to amend the White Paper by adding a 19th category dealing with political refugees.

This category 19, welcomed as a great improvement, caused bitter disappointment when it was made public. It was so narrowly defined that even the most liberal interpretation would only allow an insignificant proportion of the political refugees to be covered, leaving the vast majority of the brave fighters against Hitlerism and Fascism still outside the ranks of the lucky few who could now hope for release, and it provided for yet another tribunal which had to be passed, although no such slow machinery was found necessary for most of the other categories.

It took from August 22nd, when Sir John made his statement about category 19 in the House of Commons, to September 25th, before the new tribunal met at all. A month later the Home Office had still failed to grant a single release under this category.

According to an answer given to Mr. Mander and Mr. Strauss by the new Home Secretary, Mr. Herbert Morrison, in the House on October 17th, only 135 persons (out of about 15,000 internees) had applied under category 19, of which the tribunal had considered 70 and recommended for release 17 cases up to that date.

While more than 5,000 odd internees have been given back their freedom for other reasons, every single political anti-Nazi fighter who appealed under category 19 is still, after four months and more, behind barbed wire.

A few days ago the *News Chronicle* wrote in its leading article dealing with the untimely requisitioning of the Baltic State ships: " Not merely do we take a long time to make up our minds, but there appear to be powers which can even torpedo a decision after it is reached."

F. G.

INDIA—A CHALLENGE TO LABOUR

SIR,—Mr. Leonard Woolf's suggestion of Gandhi as Viceroy to unite India and help our war effort is not practicable. For Gandhi, non-violence goes as deep as life itself, and he would not touch our war effort. His personal position is unique. Politically, it is a different story. To the Moslems he is a convinced Hindu, and recent years have made a sharp divergence between him and very strong sections of nationalist opinion in Bengal and Maharastra. As his celebrated weekly journal, *Harijan*, shows in every issue, he is now consciously and deliberately " voyaging through strange seas of thought alone."

On the one side, the Government is now trying again to smash Congress, by ordinances and hundreds of arrests. On the other side, the extreme Left here believe in fairies, and talk of an irresistible " movement of the Indian masses " which will sweep aside both Fascism : Nazism and Imperialism. These people would have been excited in the time of Wat Tyler and would have been sure that next week king and barons would all be thrown into the Thames. There is no such movement: nothing but a vast helpless poverty and misery, easily shot down or stampeded into panic, without arms, without physical strength or leadership. Meanwhile, the war has split into two halves, and its whole eastern half must be based on India, whose resources and man-power are being dragged into what is our war and not yet hers. We are being told nothing of what is happening in India except an occasional B.B.C. announcement that a Muslim League meeting in Peshawar (in the province where the League could not win a single seat) and an All-India Conference (there are many laws in India, but no law that forbids you calling yourself and your closest friend an All-India Conference) in Nagpur (of all places!) have " unanimously " decided to support us. But Nehru is in prison—and there is no man in any land who draws the peculiarly personal affection from men and women of all creeds that he draws. We shall get news from India before long, however, and it is likely to awaken even our apathy.

A settlement is possible on terms which would provide for ordered transition to self-government when the war ends. But you cannot get that settlement, because " the Left " do not care. Labour is said to have a say in national policy, but what Labour leader has said one word about India since the war began? What policy has Labour for India? Or what foreign policy at all? And where, outside industrial output, are its leaders pulling any weight?

EDWARD THOMPSON

Oxford.

THE CATHOLIC-LATIN MYTH

SIR,—Neither Miss Odette Keun nor your readers need worry. There has been no independent confirmation of the German News Agency's reports about the Fulda Conference, and the Vatican Radio has more than once warned its listeners against believing German reports. Thus on September 3rd it stated: " So far no communiqué for the public concerning the Fulda Conference has been issued by any competent or informed authority." It has also pointed out various inaccuracies about that conference and other German propagated news about Catholics. Nor has the *Osservatore Romano* been suppressed. Miss Keun will do well to consult the Catholic papers before swallowing doses of German propaganda.

As regards Mr. Horsfall Carter's reference to the *Catholic Herald*, I note that he quotes the one leading article in three months that could possibly be used to substantiate his general attack on the Catholic press, and even in this case he is obliged to put a " *sic* " in the quotation, because otherwise it would convey an odd impression to his readers. Prussia was purposefully inserted because it is our view that the ruling castes in Prussia, Russia, the United States and Britain have been bound together in an essentially non-European understanding for a commercial and secularist domination of the world, and to this understanding Conservatives, Socialists and Liberals in this country are fundamentally loyal. Our sympathies are with the European tradition, to be found not only in the Latin countries, but in Western Germany, the lands within the old Austrian Empire and Ireland. Moreover, we believe that the British people, inheriting so many Christian and European characteristics from history, really belong to this tradition, trampled on though it has been for generations by the politicians, the commercial classes and the publicists. It would take far too long to give all the reasons for this point of view. I am concerned here to answer Mr. Horsfall Carter. It is not, then, surprising that the *Catholic Herald* is under no illusion about the need to defeat the Prussian spirit of the Nazis, nor about the difficult position of Pétain under Prussia's heels.

Mr. Horsfall Carter, had he so wished, could have quoted passage after passage in the *Catholic Herald* which, if they do not go as far as the alleged interpretation of the views of *Tablet*, heavily underline the danger lest Pétain's religious revival prove at best precarious and at worst be swept away altogether unless Hitler is defeated.

The "Catholic-Latin Myth" is a myth; but we pray that the revival of the true European tradition, with Britain once again part of it, may be the outcome of the war. This will mean the elimination of the Totalitarianisms of the Right and of the Left and also the elimination of the no less dangerous financial Totalitarianism of London, New York, Amsterdam, the old and new Berlin and the old Paris. MICHAEL DE LA BEDOYERE,

The New Catholic Herald, Editor
67 Fleet Street, E.C.4.

SIR,—Miss Barbara Ward, in your Correspondence column, rightly reminds us that the attitude of the Roman Church towards Hitlerism—and, by implication, to the satellite "hierarchical" system of the Vichy junta—should be gauged by official utterances rather than by the statements of "irresponsible politicians." Here is one such utterance which throws some light, I think, on the point under discussion and which seems to me to be *tout ce qu'il y a de plus officiel*, for it is a series of questions and answers from a recently published *Brief and Simple Explanation of the Catholic Catechism*, by the Jesuit Father Angel Maria de Arcos, with a preface by the Archbishop of Granada:

> Question: "Is every Liberal Government hostile to the Church?" Answer: "Evidently; since whoever is not with Christ is against Him."
>
> Q.: "What are 'Liberal' principles?"
>
> A.: "Those of 1798 [*sic*]: the so-called national Sovereignty, freedom of religious cults, freedom of the press, freedom of instruction, and other such."
>
> Q.: "Then there is no grade of Liberalism that can be good?"
>
> A.: "None: because Liberalism is mortal sin and anti-Christian in essence."

This condemnation of the freedom we are fighting for may help to explain the curious fact that, though the Pope and his predecessor, as Miss Ward points out, have rarely spoken since the Encyclical *Mit Brennender Sorge* without denouncing the Nazi system, yet Hitler can count on the support of millions of Catholics in Germany, Austria, and Italy—not to mention the "cordial and comradely" friendship of Franco, and the "wholehearted collaboration" of Marshal Pétain, who was recently held up, in the columns of the Vatican *Osservatore Romano*, as the model French statesman.

21, East Avenue, HAROLD BINNS
Bournemouth.

STATE CAPITALISM

SIR,—Mr. Davenport's scheme needs much more detailed explanation before it can be judged. Briefly he proposes two things: (1) That the State become owner of all capital and lend it for a "royalty." (2) That the State direct the use of all capital under two categories (*a*) "Public Board" type with maximum dividend 8 per cent., (*b*) "Adventure" type with maximum dividend possibly 50 per cent. The first proposal means apparently a huge new tax on income. Some estimate of its amount and its incidence is surely required to justify the plan. The second proposal means an enormous increase of the Civil Service.

An attempt to work out the practical meaning of the scheme raises doubts as to its feasibility and its political and social effects. For example, a man of 60 living on the 3 per cent. interest of £5,000 savings finds that he has a new tax to pay because, it may be, he has been thrifty or capable. A crofter, living a hard but to him satisfying life, on a croft bought by his savings of £500, finds a new tax to be paid and his savings gone. A workman with £200 in the Co-op. finds he has lost legal "possession" of it and has a new tax to pay to the State. I need not multiply instances. If it is argued that on a "royalty" basis they would not suffer new taxation, Mr. Davenport should really go into details as to the amount and incidence of the "royalty," for example where the skill of one farmer produced a surplus from a farm where another less skilled could not. Will it be a case of a "royalty" imposed on produce or a tax imposed on agricultural "value" of the farm? And if the crofter becomes too old to work and takes his Old Age pension, is he allowed State bonds for £500, and do they revert to the State at his death?

The second proposal means an enormous increase of the Civil Service to collect the information necessary for the proposed transfer of capital to the State, and to issue permits for new capital ventures. There will be required a very intelligent type of Civil Servant to estimate the probable cultural and financial value of a new film or a new invention, and if £100,000 of State capital lent out to produce a new film is lost as frequently as in our present system, one can foresee some animated sessions of the new economic parliament. Mr. Davenport does not like the idea of "hordes of minor Trade Union officials." Will there not be new "hordes" of Civil Servants? Then there will be unemployment, for that inevitably accompanies the operations of "adventure" capital. If it is a defect of the Labour Party's schemes so it is here.

In short, Mr. Davenport's scheme raises so many difficulties that he will need a book to justify it. As he is in earnest he will need to face the political and social reactions as well. It is no argument to say that "the workers won't wait" or that "we may have it thrust upon us with blood and tears." *Something* may have to be done, but not necessarily Mr. Davenport's scheme. Other people could argue that the shop steward will not stand 50 per cent. dividends or the individual control of £100,000 permitted by Mr. Davenport. A Conservative might push a scheme and justify it by saying: "The R.A.F. won't wait." The claim made by a growing number of people that the workers won't fight if they have to return to pre-war conditions is simply untrue. They are fighting for our present civilisation, bad as it is, against slavery under Hitler. Drive forward with reforms during the war by all means, but do not pretend that the war started or is being carried on only for reform. Still less is anybody justified in claiming by implication that the "workers" are fighting for his scheme.

M. W. MURRAY

CLAIMS DISCLAIMED

SIR,—I fully appreciate the honour of so thought-provoking and courteously worded a review as that by Mr. Fyvel of my *Crusade for Civilisation*, and I should not presume to cavil at any of his strictures on what I have said. But when it comes to inventing a case for me that I have never dreamed of putting, in order triumphantly to demolish it (and me), it does seem a little hard, especially as more people are likely to read his review than my book.

"He [that is myself] claims to be a Tory Imperialist. . . ." If I might take a leaf out of Wellington's book, I would say to Mr. Fyvel: "If you can claim that, you can claim anything," and I should be keenly interested to know in what chapter, passage, or sentence, I have, either directly or by the remotest implication, claimed to be anything of the sort. It is, of course, open to Mr. Fyvel to argue that I am one without knowing, or admitting, it. But what he says is that I *claim* to be. Well, do I? And if so—how, when, or where?

If Mr. Fyvel will kindly turn to my concluding chapter (p. 239) he will see that I have said that "there has ceased to be any such thing as a British Empire and that British Imperialism is as dead as George III," and that I have described the contest on which we are engaged as one in which the principle of freedom is at mortal issue with that of empire, one that we must win in our own minds and souls before we can bring our utmost force to bear against the enemy.

This, which constitutes the main theme of the book, is hardly what I should have thought proper to Tory or any other Imperialism. But if Mr. Fyvel does, he has only to say so.

This does not exhaust the list of things that Mr. Fyvel claims that I claim. I "claim that it was Britain, and not the unhappy populations of Vienna, Prague, and Madrid, which made 'concessions' to the Nazis in the interests of peace."

I certainly said somewhere *en passant*—what everybody knows—that Mr. Chamberlain's passion for peace led him to make unprecedented concessions (his opponents may argue weak or wicked concessions, if they choose), but I never said anything to imply that the populations in question either had or hadn't made them too. As I didn't happen to be discussing the pros and cons of Munich (Mr. Fyvel claims that I "deplore" further controversy about it—again when or where?) there was no particular reason I should do so.

And again I "do not see yet" what Mr. Fyvel sees in his oracular—"A Quisling, a Pétain, for a Runciman!" Well, if I saw anything so meaningless, I should certainly consult an oculist, but how on earth Mr. Fyvel knows whether I see it or not, heaven only knows, since I have never by the remotest implication disclosed my opinion, if any, of Lord Runciman, his mission, or anything that is his. But Mr. Fyvel is so pleased with his idea that he again taxes me with the inability to grasp the connection between the aged Marshal and this noble Red Herring.

Mr. Fyvel, I am afraid, has for some reason or other elected to label me Tory Imperialist, and a representative of that official British Conservative policy that he imagines to be responsible—amongst other things—for Dakar, though why the Labour and Liberal members of the Government are not equally responsible for its policy he does not explain. Personally, I don't know what the official Conservative policy is at present, and care less, since I feel that the less we hear of party and class differences, the sooner we shall dispose of the common enemy of us all. But Mr. Fyvel, having summarily affixed what he considers the appropriate label to the cover, proceeds to review the sort of book he thinks a Tory Imperialist would write.

It is a pity, because if he had done me the honour of checking up inside the cover, I should no doubt have derived profit as well as pleasure from his criticism. ESMÉ WINGFIELD-STRATFORD

The Oaks, Berkhamsted.

[Mr. Fyvel writes: "The Czech and Spanish people would have fought against Hitler: Mr. Chamberlain saw to it that both were disarmed. To call this Mr. Chamberlain's 'sacrifice' or 'concession' is the typical Tory view of to-day with which nine-tenths of Europe is in violent disagreement. Similarly, I would claim that only a Tory Imperialist could hold, as Dr. Wingfield-Stratford does, that South Africa to-day, where the status of the natives has worsened since the Treaty of Union, is a success."—ED., *N.S. & N.*]

LONDON EDUCATION

SIR,—In your issue of October 26th you refer on page 411 to the work of the Birkbeck and Morley Colleges in organising courses for students during daylight hours on Saturdays and Sundays. It would be a pity if the impression were gained that these are the only facilities for such courses in London.

Some of your readers may be glad to know that in all the London Polytechnics and Technical Institutes and in many of the Evening Institutes there are facilities for study, not only on Mondays to Fridays, but also during daylight hours on Saturdays and Sundays. The fees for the week-end classes are calculated at the usual evening class rates. E. G. SAVAGE,

The County Hall, Education Officer
S.E.1.

WINTER ENTERTAINMENT

SIR,—I thoroughly agree with Mr. Raper. Most of London's amateur orchestras having disbanded on the outbreak of war, the Sunday Practice Orchestra was formed so that music lovers might meet weekly to make "a joyful noise." Within a short time we had a full symphony orchestra, 50 strong.

We meet at 10.30 every Sunday morning for two hours at Sadlers Wells Theatre. Attendances have suffered from the Blitz, but we still muster 20 or so. More players in all sections would be cordially welcomed. Those who can pay 9*d.* a time towards expenses.

The conductors are Geoffrey Corbett and the undersigned. EDWARD POLLITZER

24 Fairacres,
Roehampton Lane, S.W.15.

A LETTER FROM BEYOND THE WOMB

SIR,—I read with indignation the article in your last issue in which you refer to the proposal for Family Allowances. It is all very well for Miss Eleanor Rathbone, to whom the granting of Family Allowances will be the successful culmination of a long fight; it is all very well for the employers who will get cheaper labour because there will be more of it, and for the Government who will get more soldiers to fight their wars for them; and it is all very well for the working man who will be able to gratify his desire for paternity without having to pay for it.

But what about me? Have I no rights, no claim to consideration? Am I not, after all, one of the principal persons involved?

It is true that I have no legal existence and therefore no vote. If I and my kind had votes, we should put a stop to a lot of half-baked nonsense that passes as progressive. For our majority would be considerable, and we know what we want.

And what we want is to be born into your world with, at any rate, a sporting chance of being happy and of achieving the highest level of consciousness that is possible to *Homo Sapiens*. God knows the level you have achieved is not high, otherwise you wouldn't be in the mess you are now.

We shall have to go through all the trouble of being born, all the indignity of being helpless infants, all the pain of cutting teeth. We shall be the prey of hunger and troublesome sex impulses which, if we are not physically attractive, may go bad on us and lead us into dangerous aberrations. We shall be forced to sit in school when we want to be contacting and exploring our environment, and to do soul-destroying routine work when we want to be exploring the universe and finding out about life. And this frustrated existence is the best you have to offer us, even if we are lucky enough to be born the children of reasonably well-to-do people.

But the crux of the matter is that our chances of happiness and self-realisation in your world will depend upon the possession of an income, or of a share of an income possessed by our parents. Do you call 5*s*. or 6*s*. a week an income? I call it chicken feed. As a monument to the niggardliness of the richest civilisation that has ever existed; as an assertion of the value it places upon human existence in its messy society, it would perhaps be appropriate; but it is no inducement to us to relinquish our blessed state of insentience, and any doctor will tell you of the scream of rage which the more robust of us give when we find ourselves in your world. I say that no one has the right to force existence upon us unless he can be reasonably assured that we shall be born with an inheritance sufficient to keep us from want and with mental and physical attributes which will form the foundation of a full and happy life.

Your 5*s*. or 6*s*. a week will do no more than relieve the workers of the lowest grade from the necessity of going short of food in order to feed us in the early stages of infancy. It will not feed and clothe us in childhood nor save us from drudgery in youth. It will merely enable any Tom, Dick or Harry or any Jane who finds contraception too much trouble to embark on the responsibility of parenthood without anxiety for the immediate future. And it will leave the flower of your civilisation, the young men and women who have painfully dragged themselves up the hard and slippery rungs of your state ladder of learning (known to us as the State-Aided Cream Separator and Throw-Awayer) exactly where they are now . . . in the evolutionary ash-can. ONE OF THE NEXT GENERATION

56 Belsize Park,
N.W.3.

THE FEAR OF DEATH

SIR,—Mr. Joad tells us in his delightful essay on "The Fear of Death" that we cannot know anything of death because the dead either cannot or do not describe its state to us who are alive.

Now, if we know nothing of how it feels to be dead, we do know something of the sensations of dying, and it is, as Mr. Joad writes, more the anticipations of the discomforts of dying than changing to the dead state which causes the universal fear of death. In addition to fear there is a general reluctance to die, due partly to uncertainty of the new phase of our supposed existence, and partly to an intense desire to know some little more of the destiny of mankind in general, and the future of our own people in particular.

This desire, so keen in the strong years of youth and middle life, fades under the fatigue of approaching death and in extreme old age.

The experience of dying was well described to me by a woman who all but died from haemorrhage. She was saved by blood transfusion. After her recovery she told me of three distinct phases.

The first was one of feeling physically "very ill," with increasing weakness and a helpless sensation of "falling through the bed." This merged into a mood of deep anxiety, not for herself, though she felt the approach of death, but for her family in their forthcoming difficulties and bereavement. During the third phase, however, I remember her tell how all anxiety and distress disappeared, leaving her in a state of calm tranquillity.

It is possible that this may have been her dream during the brief minutes of unconsciousness, which so nearly passed into death. How we should like to be sure whether or no death ends this dream!

12 Wimpole Street, ALECK BOURNE
W.1.

DAKAR

SIR,—Howard Fox concludes his discussion of why General de Gaulle failed at Dakar with the argument that we can "encourage revolt in the French Colonies" if the Government clearly states that "we are fighting to liberate the peoples of *Europe* from Fascist tyranny," etc. Surely this is an illusion?

Presumably the Dakar expedition was intended to rally French West Africa to the cause of General de Gaulle, following the example of French Equatorial Africa. According to Lord Hailey's *African Survey*, French West Africa has a *native* population of 14,703,000 and a *European* population—of 19,061! General de Gaulle apparently appealed to the 19 thousand but ignored the 14 millions. Now even if—as is not true—the great majority of the 19 thousand whites were prepared to support General de Gaulle for the liberation of *Europe* from Fascist tyranny, what could they do without the support of the 14 million natives? How many of the 14 millions would be prepared to fight for the liberation of *Europe* from Fascism without very concrete guarantees of the liberation of *West Africa* from imperialist exploitation?

In any case, a large proportion of the 19 thousand whites are militarist reactionaries, imperialists and pro-Fascists, interested only in the survival of the colonial system which has given them power and importance. As the Union of Democratic Control remarks in its pamphlet, *Why France Fell*, "their dilemma is acute, for in the long run the old order in the colonies cannot be saved by capitulation any more than by resistance to Fascism." If General de Gaulle spoke of *African* liberation, the 14 million would soon settle the dilemma of the 19 thousand for them. But General de Gaulle cannot speak of colonial emancipation unless Mr. Churchill does too. The British Colonies and India are *our* problem. Talk of liberating *Europe* will not solve it, no more than it will solve General de Gaulle's problem.

31 Broadhurst Gardens, FRANÇOIS LAFITTE
Eastcote,
Middlesex.

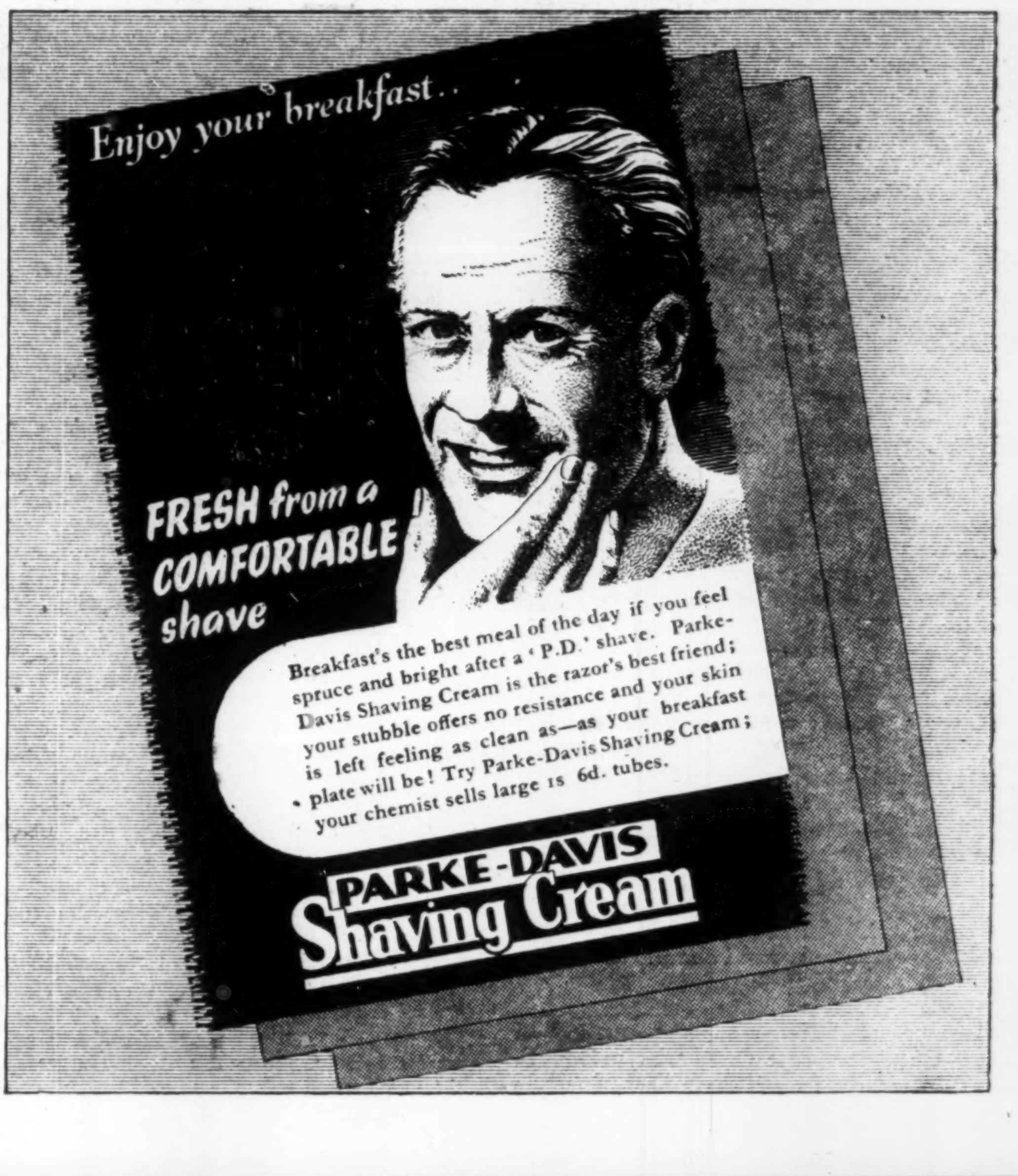
PURCHASE TAX

SIR,—Your remarks about the Purchase Tax in the last paragraph of this week's "Comments" call for clarification. You distinguish between averaging and "averaging." I think you should have explained the subtle distinction. "Averaging" to most people in the retail trade means writing up existing stocks to the price of a new delivery of similar goods, with a consequent additional profit on the existing stock. Averaging on the other hand means the calculation of the prices of the existing stock and the new delivery on the basis of the quantities of each. Therefore, the price for the whole range is uniform but no additional profit accrues.

Owing to the difficulty of obtaining supplies retailers are taking in deliveries from day to day as and when they can be obtained, and to take proper weighted averages at the time of each delivery would be quite impracticable. Contrary to your contention no alteration in normal routine is required to price goods according to the amount which has been paid for them. Certainly this method would not involve additional overheads.

The "averaging" which you advocate is open to extensive abuse and the public will be quick to realise it. You are no doubt aware that 17 Local Price Regulation Committees are operating under the Prices of Goods Act, and no complaint made to any of them goes uninvestigated.

There is no practical difficulty in running two, or even more, sets of prices simultaneously. I know from experience that the public appreciate the system, which has obvious advantages for the purchaser. A RETAILER



Breakfast's the best meal of the day if you feel spruce and bright after a 'P.D.' shave. Parke-Davis Shaving Cream is the razor's best friend; your stubble offers no resistance and your skin is left feeling as clean as—as your breakfast plate will be! Try Parke-Davis Shaving Cream; your chemist sells large 1s 6d. tubes.

Current Literature

BOOKS IN GENERAL

SOME energy in reading goes into building up a private portrait of the author. We scribble a doodle between the lines and it bobs up at the ends of chapters, now massive, now impish, and if absurd or wrong, not quite irrelevant. While reading Henry Green's *Pack My Bag* (Hogarth, 7*s*. 6*d*.), which is a kind of anthropological study of his childhood and youth as a rich boy at prep. school, public school and university, and in his father's foundry, I see a large, sad, groping, ruminative and responsible figure like an elephant in a cage. I am sorry for him, as one is for all large things—they always look sorry for themselves, too—sorry as one is for the enormous burden of memory and sensibility the elephant has, sorry to see him in a cage, too, where there is so little room to turn round. And there seems to be a moral in the despondent industry of that clever trunk which, after the feet have cautiously pushed him forward, fumbles at a few grains on the floor and coils them fancifully into his mouth. What (one asks) would this large animal with his scrupulous slow-motion manners be like in natural surroundings? The question is idle. Rich, prep. school, public school, university—he was born in captivity.

Christopher Isherwood and Cyril Connolly have both gone over this public school ground. Auden has it in his system, too, and with a similar acid disappointment. The generation which grew up between the two wars is a disappointed generation and, up to Munich, was cut off and without power in business, in social life and politics. That has changed now; the war is making us catch up. The two things that are common to writers like Isherwood, the Connolly of *Enemies of Promise*, Auden and Mr. Green, are their sense of the frustration of leadership in the places which were supposed to be its forcing houses—the great public schools—though Mr. Green differs in seeming to agree to accept this stoically for the time being; and a compulsive preoccupation with school life and its rituals. To anyone who has been to board schools and secondary schools, such an obsession is impossible and hard to credit. We soon forget the school part of our school days. There was nothing to remember. I do, indeed, remember a teacher who came to one of our football matches and shouted "Play Up School," and how we all smirked with vulgar embarrassment at what we thought was an attempt to insinuate some of the Public School spirit—and we knew what that was because there was a Public School in the neighbourhood. We knew we weren't "School." We were simply a school, known by a road name, an arrangement made by the L.C.C. to absorb the children of so many streets. We were like the drains, the street lighting and the public libraries, and if he had called out "Play up the Rates" we would have understood it, for we knew that was where we or "it" came out of. We used to be envious of the public school boys, for to those living in the exciting but shoddy wilderness of freedom, convention and ritual are longed for; since then we have invented our own outside snobbery which is not quite sincere. We have said "Sour Grapes," but it shocks me to hear the public school boys agree that the grapes were sour after all. We do not like to believe it. That is why I think the public schools may survive this war; the outsiders want them to survive, and if they can be knocked down to us cheaply, they will.

Still, this does not explain the contemporary obsession. "Eternal schoolboy" used to be a compliment, and as Mr. Green seems to imply in various passages, their life was a miniature of the intensely disciplined, formalised life of hierarchy and inhibition (relieved by herd violence) which the ruling classes had to lead. The circus animals were being trained. The obsession has become neurotic since it was observed that the circus might be closed down before you grew up. What was alarming was that the system, as Mr. Green points out in his narrative, might have been the model for the organisation of Fascism, with its Storm Troopers, Gauleiters, Gestapo, espionage and its stress either on the body or an imposed point of view; and that the rest of Europe took these things up when we were getting tired of them.

But back to the elephant. The peak year for self-pity and the death-wish was the year between Munich and the war, and this was when Mr. Green wrote his autobiography. He intended it as an epitaph. He was born in 1905, that is to say he was old enough to feel guilt about not being in the last war and some of his premonitions about being killed in this one seem to be part of that desire to die in the last war, which so many of us had in the year after Munich. I do not suppose Mr. Green would feel self-pity now we have at last learned to pity others; and if there is a shortage of truth speaking in this war there is also a shortage of major lies. It is the advantage of becoming more savage that there are fewer pretensions, and therefore fewer causes for intellectual complaint.

A curiosity among distinguished writers, Mr. Green is a well-off business man and this has given him a positive humility about people, or rather he has had to see the need of this humility and of keeping silence; in the full-time intellectual any humility one has is negative; it just comes from the inferiority complex. Mr. Green has also gone in for originality; some of that is visual fantasy:

> He (the gardener at Forthampton) used to lean on his spade with one foot up and go to sleep very much as later one was to see friends lean up against bars and go to sleep with one foot on the rail.

But checked by a moral eye:

> He did not like my mother, and when he was awake, which was not often, it was mostly against her that he talked. Was this the first disloyalty that I listened to him, and did my brothers walk away while I stayed? I only know that I adored her and that nothing he said could alter this even; it was as though someone were bringing out mean things about adoration to another full of his first love, what was said came as laughter in the face of creation, and this and my love for my mother is what I first remember.

There is a studious originality too, the sensitive trunk fumbles very consciously among the straw.

But what he is up to is very interesting. Many are trying to write a simple-spoke prose because speech seems closest to the skin of people, and "the people," as in politics, have become the anonymous Muse of literature, and Mr. Green is continually quoting from them. But he does this in a sad, poker-faced way which comes from dealing in secondhand goods, but also because he is quoting those clichés: "Are too young to have much to remember," "Are so quick to take it up"—which perfectly express the upper middle classes' gratitude for a phrase which will prevent thought. Mr. Green's prose has, therefore, a double character; it is at once prose revived by childish draughts of speech; but a prose diligently fitted out with fossils in order to indicate the terrific pressure on this society from outside. The following story, given as a contrasting example of working-class hilarity and directness and heard when Mr. Green had left Oxford to serve his time in his father's factory, looks stylised to me, but perhaps that is intentional. The word beautiful is pronounced "be-eautiful":

> A cow in a field saw a beautiful buttercup but when she sat down to eat this beautiful buttercup she found a bee had settled on it and the cow said to the bee you get off, this is my beautiful buttercup but the bee said I will not I got here first. So the cow said you go on get off it and the bee said I will not and the cow said I saw it first but the bee said I was here in front of you, so then the cow said if you dont I shall eat you as well as my buttercup but the bee said if you do I will sting you after. Then the cow ate the beautiful buttercup and the bee and when the bee was down in the cow's belly he thought it all was so dark so nice and warm he might as well have a nap before he stings the cow. So he drops off for a bit but when he woke up the cow was gone.

But for the words "in front of you" this story would be a fake. Mr. Green has an acute ear.

The other interesting point in Mr. Green's anthropology is that it is not primarily about "characters." Poole, the garden at Forthampton, Dinge, the high-nostrilled housemaid at school who was cruelly spied on while she wept after breaking her favourite wash-basin, are among the few named people. The rest are as real as is necessary—the master crying out "You filthy little beasts," or exhibiting Green as a prime piece of dairy fed, to parents who had come down to investigate the wartime feeding, the girl who wouldn't talk to him at the staff dance because if he thought she was going to talk like women of his own class talked she just wasn't going to, even though he was the boss's son—such people rub against Mr. Green's sensitive hide and one knows they have been near because it quivers. A system flattens out character and produces merely caricatures, and Mr. Green is not interested in those. He is aware in a generalised way which is, after all, how we remember our emotions. In boyhood we are prone to undelineated states of feeling, for we are explorers, chiefly concerned with the lie of the land only. The specific is dangerous. Thus when his parents were thought to have been killed in an accident, he notes how this separated him from the school. You are only important in so far as you react to the code; private life is an aberration. "My God, So-and-So, you are looking awful," that is the limit of private recognition; and as Mr. Green's story shows at that time, one is constantly acting feelings one hasn't had out of pious desire to do the right thing, as he did when he grimaced with manufactured grief in chapel. A boy lacks all kinds of emotional equipment. He found this was true of working-class life, too, in another way, where the general preoccupation with insecurity and fear of illness put a tabu on the talk of people's private troubles among the men. (That was true of life in the works, but was it true of the lives of neighbours in a street?) The stress on general things, those deep breaths by which in youth we grow up in fits and starts, has meant a great increase in the field of sensibility, which the individualist poetical approach to youth had conventionalised. All Mr. Green's observations are unconventional, and I doubt if a truer picture of that stilted, peeping, shy and modest English adolescence when one is aware of sex long before knowing precisely about it or even wanting to, has ever been written.

He is running to roll call and collides with a girl:

> After apologising I went away dazed for this then was what it must be like this softness like a tight bolster and over her chest some sort of shirt covered with starched frills which had pricked my chin. I told no one and come to that, have never told anyone before.

The inexplicable hunger that drives one to be alone, the desire to be alone and yet the horror of loneliness, the shame of being seen to be alone and the refuge, when not alone, of talking loudly nineteen to the dozen, as if to put a plate-glass window of words and stones between one and the person one is talking to: Mr. Green has groped and groped into the past until he has come back with the evidence.

V. S. PRITCHETT

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NEW NOVELS

Babes in the Darkling Wood. By H. G. WELLS. *Secker and Warburg.* 9s. 6d.

Lighter Than Day. By DESMOND HAWKINS. *Longmans.* 7s. 6d.

Little Man—*This* Now. By X. Y. Z. *Gollancz.* 8s. 6d.

People talk a deal of nonsense about the Old mulishly refusing to allow the Young to replace them. The truth of the matter is that the younger generation (though it is hardly to be blamed) is not so sprightly as it might be.

Now, characteristically, Mr. Wells has written the novel that ought, by rights, to have been produced by someone younger. I say "the" novel, because it was a novel that had to come: a comprehensive presentation of two young, really intelligent, contemporary lovers face to face with the world-mess. The only, but serious, trouble with the book is that very often one is not sure whether one is reading a novel or something that should have a name like Outline of the Absence of Science in the Modern World. James Twain, the hero, is an enthusiastic and gifted critic of psychology, biology, etc., on the *New Spectator ;* his father is a notoriously severe magistrate who has half browbeaten his sympathetic, observant wife out of contact with reality. Stella is James' charming young mistress, a student at Cambridge; and she has an uncle, Dr. Robert Kentlake, a famous psycho-therapeutist, who is perhaps the dominating character of the book. He is a tongue-in-the-cheek projection of the author himself, and watches over the destinies of the young couple; thwarting the jealousy of James' father, and the possessiveness of Stella's ninny mother. The story, in a nutshell, is the young couple's battle, first against their parents, and then against James' mental collapse, which is brought on by his appalling experiences in Poland and Finland during the invasions.

Mr. Wells has written a plausible, but faintly defensive preface to *Babes in the Darkling Wood*, in which he says that it is "the most comprehensive and ambitious dialogue novel I have ever attempted. I will try to explain certain devices I have adopted . . . ." He goes on to justify a method which has certainly resulted in the novel with some of the longest conversations I have ever read, and towards the end he says something very revealing. The italics are mine: "they" and "them" refer to his characters:

> Again and again, to do them justice, it has been necessary to clarify, condense, expand or underline their words. Nevertheless, *what is given here is what they imagined they were saying, and what indeed they meant.* And I do not know of any way of writing the novel of ideas that can dispense with such magnified and crystallised conversations and meditations . . .

The flaw in Mr. Wells' novel is concealed within this italicised sentence. James and Stella talk too much, too long, and too unhumanly. They are lively, credible, prepossessing creatures —as the author knows so well how to make them, but only at immense intervals. It is all very fine for Mr. Wells to emphasise, as he does elsewhere in his preface, the importance of Dialogue. "The dialogue, written or staged, is one of the oldest forms of literary expression." The value of dialogue stands or falls by its actuality, its lifelikeness: it is the one element in a novel that *must* possess verisimilitude. I have admitted that there are moments when Mr. Wells' dialogue, and thereby his novel, is excellent. To give one example, there are admirable duels between James (Gemini) and his father, who speaks first in the ensuing quotation. The time is early summer, 1939:

> "Where is your new social structure, even in embryo? Your new way of life? Show me what you have. A lot of ramshackle people all at sixes and sevens and mostly drunk and depraved. . . . Agitators. . . . Sabotage. . . . Is that all?"
>
> "Russia?" thought Stella, but she did not interrupt. This was Gemini's affair and he must handle it in his own way.
>
> "But look at your own world, my dear father! This is pure romance of yours, this sort of Crown-and-Church-led world you are talking about, this large, stable, established order, going on from strength to strength. I never expected you of all people to indulge in romance. *Your* world now is just a dismal jumble of armaments and fear. It is breaking down everywhere into warfare and violence. The Cross over Guernica. Holy massacre in Burgos. And here? Scampering like hares and burrowing like rabbits. A.R.P."
>
> "It can stand a lot of that. It has vast reserves to draw upon. Need for discipline there is, but no excuse yet for panic."
>
> "You mean in effect that it will last your time and that is all you care for."
>
> "I mean in effect that it will last my time and your time and a lot of time after that. Church bells will be ringing a hundred years from now. There will still be England and a British Empire and probably a regenerate France. Paris less *gay*, perhaps, but happier. . . ."

And so on. It is stimulating, convincing, and, most important of all, it is the classic father-son duologue of to-day, and is here set forth, to my knowledge, for the first time. Only too soon, however, and sadly enough, such passages grow paler, loftier and chillier, and the reader finds himself facing a truly formidable expanse of theorising: that it is sound; that it is enclosed in inverted commas is no alleviation. To sum up, James and Stella eventually triumph over the spiritual evils of our epoch, but I am afraid that these evils have somewhat triumphed over *Babes in the Darkling Wood.*

Lighter than Day is a novel with a not dissimilar basic theme, and, curiously enough, the main fault lies in the same direction. The book revolves around four young people much preoccupied with a disintegrating social environment, and the trouble, in this case, is not that their conversation lapses into a politico-philosophic text, but that it is too high falutin', and meticulous. Mr. Hawkins has sketched their background quite clearly; their home-county-tennis-party way of life, etc., and whereas Stella and James could, sometimes, have talked at their level, Nick, Clive, Benita, and Jackie simply could not have managed it. There are more ways than that used by Mr. Wells of making dialogue unreal. Still, *Lighter than Day* makes better reading than *Babes in the Darkling Wood*, in that the characters etherealise far less often and for far shorter periods. Mr. Hawkins is a patient, scrupulous writer of notable seriousness: I have read nothing for some time in which the author has permitted himself fewer facile moments, irrelevancies, or frivolities. Yet there are times when I ask myself if this very concentration, this unwinking gravity does not bring its disadvantages. It is like a man looking constantly through a pair of binoculars; the field of view is magnified, but constrained. I could quote an example of the characters' artificiality of speech, but it might prejudice someone against a writer with really remarkable analytic powers, and that is the last thing I would wish. Instead, I will include some lines from a passage in which Mr. Hawkins touches on what I believe to be the fundamental cleavage between the present generation and the last. I cannot quote the two pages necessary to do the author justice, but I will add that although this cleavage is implicit in *Babes in the Darkling Wood*, it is nowhere brought forward, or explained, to such advantage as in *Lighter than Day*. Nick and Clive are the children: Mr. Hawtrey is their father, and Mr. Carrick their uncle:

> . . . Nick and Clive had very little to say in any company about the nation's finances, the state of industry, the Stock Exchange. Perhaps it was strange, since their material destinies were bound up in the same set of circumstances as those of their father and their uncle; but here a chasm divided the generations. Mr. Hawtrey and Mr. Carrick regarded their occupations as little autonomous kingdoms which they controlled; they felt that they and their kind ran the national machinery, as it were. . . . To them the State was the horse that their forefathers had trained; buck as it might, they were still in the saddle.
>
> Clive and Nick had no such confidence. Their imaginations were not inspired by the legend of hard work, probity and thrift earning the inevitable reward of wealth and public respect. They thought in terms of monopolies, combines, bureaucracies and—"rackets." They were disenchanted, rightly or wrongly, about the "romance" of business. They thought of the State as a kind of hostile Juggernaut, operated by anonymous "interests." For them the whole machinery of social organisation was, in Nick's characteristic word, a "racket," and they slipped into a kind of passive anarchy. . . .

Here is the most powerful, and the *new*, development in the family quarrel—new because it was an attitude only taken up, before 1914, by the exceptional, "queer" child. Now, it is quite general. I cannot leave Mr. Hawkins' novel without a flying reference to the love-scenes. They display an unusually acute grasp of hidden needs and motives.

Little Man—This *Now*, in spite of the appallingly unoriginal title and nom-de-plume, and in spite of the fact I have placed it third on the list, is the best of this week's collection, as a *novel*. But it is one which requires little comment. It is simply the best description, so far, of ordinary town life in Germany before and just after the outbreak of war. It answers that question which one hears asked so often: "Well, if the Germans are nice, ordinary people, like everyone else, how could they possibly put up with Nazism?" Walter, the hero, is introduced as a contented, liberal rent-collector. He half deludes himself about the Nazis, and half allows himself to be hustled into the movement. He says: "We've got to try to work in with them, make something better out of Nazism and Germany." The whole story is that of his mounting disillusion, and has plainly been written by someone who knows every detail of the background. On the last page, he gives vent to this tragic cry:

> Think of all the people we have persecuted and betrayed, the Jews, the Communists, the Socialists, the Catholics . . . what do you think is going to happen here once our authority is gone? We must fight, fight to the bitter end!

For specialists, the volume is full of detailed and extremely interesting accounts of such things as the Hitler Youth, the near-revolts of September, 1938, etc., and for the ordinary reader there is a moving, authentic human document. I will conclude by saying that it is the only book I have come across in which one could sympathise, and reasonably, with an S.A. man.

BRIAN HOWARD

SEX AND THE NEW WORLD

Sex Morality To-morrow. By KENNET INGRAM. *Allen and Unwin.* 6s.

On an historical view I believe that the se experiments that followed the last war are on of the clearest proofs that we have been livin through a profoundly moral age. A very larg number of people have been seriously searchin for a moral solution for problems that wer hitherto neglected or covered up; if they hav succeeded in discovering even the outlines of new type of sex behaviour which is adjusted t modern knowledge and standards they will hav justified an age which in other social matte certainly needs a lot of justification. Th established view that all was right withi marriage and all wrong without it had becom to the post-war generation shockingly immora It is always immoral to accept a social code whic is manifestly outworn and manifestly cruel an stupid, and always right to look for a bett

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ROUTLEDGE

The Philosophy of Peirce: Selected Writings

EDITED BY DR. JUSTUS BUCHLER

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KEGAN PAUL

standard of ethics than that laid down by authority. For authority cannot be bothered with morality; that is not its job. Authority must impose a code, often the antithesis of moral, because it is concerned with smooth social externals—in this case with the care of children, the inheritance of property and the prevention of scandal. These are authority's business and it is important business which cannot be neglected. The nineteenth-century marriage code was based on these practical necessities and they remain essential problems that have to be taken into account in shaping a new moral code. The old solution was doomed because contraception rendered possible a new and far more moral attitude to the question of children, and the new freedom of women destroyed the assumptions on which the established conception of marriage was based. Most thinking people now regard it as more moral to live in love and "in sin" than in marriage where there is no love. Men knew that in all periods; if they seldom said it clearly before the latter part of the nineteenth century that was not only because authority was powerful; it was also because the practical problems of union outside marriage were extremely difficult to solve. When knowledge offered alternative solutions the younger generation too easily assumed that freedom was in itself a solution; they took too little account of the profound problems of the human heart which were not solved, but decently shelved by the code of marriage. They experimented, sometimes they triumphed, often they suffered. Even when they were irresponsible they learnt. They made it possible to-day for us to feel that in one sphere at least, a sphere which has perhaps meant more misery in the world than war itself, a real advance has been made.

Sitting down at the beginning of the war and wondering what could come out of it, Mr. Kenneth Ingram conceived the sensible notion that whatever happened we were bound to reach a new moral code as the result of this period of trial and error. He summarises his conclusions. He assumes that what he has learnt mankind will also have learnt. This may be a large assumption unjustified by the future. In any case, it is valuable to have his common-sense summary. He bases his view on the two certainties and therefore, though we may differ in detail as the result of different experience, one can be sure that in the main he is right. The certainties are, first, that great tolerance is necessary in matters of sex because people are endlessly different. Secondly, that morality has to do not with a legal ceremony but with a mutual relation of affection. Begin with those two assumptions and you can talk good sense, as Mr. Ingram does, about contraception, divorce, homosexuality, masturbation and all the other problems that have been so terribly mismanaged by the coarse thumb of public opinion and by the practical rulings of the law courts.

When I think of the misery caused, for instance, by the ignorant handling of masturbation I am alternately furious and pitying. Nothing more relieves and astonishes the boy when he first reaches the University or goes into open workaday life than the discovery that other boys masturbate, that he is no lonely sinner, but in fact just like all the other boys making the same discovery as himself. He will not soon be paralysed or blind or imbecile as his parents and school teachers have taught him; most of the agonies of shame and fear he has suffered are common to almost all the other boys; they have arisen almost wholly from a conflict which is the result of false teaching. As soon as he ceases to worry over the matter it takes on its right perspective and becomes unimportant. On such matters Mr. Ingram talks admirable sense. His book, moderately and unsensationally worded as it is, would have been impossible only a few years ago. To-day most educated people will be generally in agreement with him; they will disagree about details rather than principles. Which means, if we can avoid a blank reaction into superstition, that this post-war generation, brought up in the old code and hurting itself vilely in trying to find another based on the moral principle that sex is justified by love and unjustified without it, have not failed in the task set them as badly as they may to-day be tempted to think they have. In their personal relations children now start with advantages of their parents' experiments and blunders. They will go on making blunders themselves. But at least they have the chance to face the real and external dangers of the present world without the handicap of the cruel and unnecessary fears and miseries which their parents, in ignorant love, thought it their duty to inflict on their children.

TOM PAINE

IKENOBŌ

Flowers, East-West, the Art of Arrangement. By J. GREGORY CONWAY and ELINOR WALLACE HIATT. *Kegan Paul.* 25s.

Many years ago I attended a party in Switzerland at which I and one other were the only Europeans. The rest were not even Swiss, but Japanese. It was just about the time when *The Bromide Book* had been published, and the phrase "I always think the Japanese are such an interesting little people" was fresh in my mind. Put to the test, it turned out to be most untrue. This was no doubt less due to the fact that our hosts, fellow-guests, and their numerous countrymen lacked interest, as to the fact that communication between us was difficult. They had very little acquaintance with the French language, less with the English, and I none with the Japanese. I remembered the advice once given me by a suave old French Ambassador in Turkey: "Si vous n'arrivez pas à vous faire comprendre par votre voisin de table, faites-lui tout simplement de temps en temps un petit signe d'amitié." That advice, helpful though it was, postulated that on one's right (or left) hand one had somebody more polyglot to talk to. Flanked by a Japanese on either side, it did not work. One could not sit in complete silence throughout dinner, so, pointing to the table decoration and speaking very loud and distinctly, I endeavoured to gain some information about the art of arranging flowers in Japan.

All that I really gained was the term used to express that art: *Ike-bani*, I thought it was, and *Ike-bani* has remained in current use in my home ever since, a solitary alien from the Far East, to describe the humblest pot of marigolds or the most exuberant sheaf from the summer garden. I now discover that I must have remembered the word wrong. It should be *Ikenobō*. Perhaps Mr. Arthur Waley will correct me if I err again, but that is the impression I derive from *Flowers, East-West*, which has just come into my hands. From this volume I learn that the art of flower-arrangement in Japan is even more subtle and elaborate than I had imagined. I suppose one ought not to find it irritating. Fastidiousness has its charm, and one can sympathise with the tea-master Sen-no-Rikyu, who in the sixteenth century stripped all blooms from his garden lest they should detract from the perfection of one single remaining flower. But surely in *Ikenobō* the stylisation of what is after all a natural thing can be overdone? Some Japanese arrangements are purely beautiful in themselves, but when we discover the extent to which our proper appreciation depends on a knowledge of their geometrical and symbolical value, something of our simple pleasure goes. Poetry is analysable, but I doubt whether any pleasure beyond an intellectual interest was ever added to a poem by a tabulation of its vowels and consonants. The same applies to flowers. Does it really matter if the leaves or sprays are placed two, or three, inches apart? To the Japanese follower of Ono no Imoko, of Senkei and Senjun, it seems to matter very much. I daresay they are right, in spite of my English inability to sympathise entirely with their reasoning. They certainly produce a delicately balanced sparse affair very different from the haphazard tussie-mussie we usually stick into the first pot that comes to hand.

Turning to the second half of this most fascinating and superbly illustrated book, I discovered that the art of flower-arrangement may be quite as elaborate in the Western hemisphere as in the Eastern. The Western hemisphere in this case means America, and the flower arrangements described relate almost entirely to social occasions. Thus you can follow the life of the débutante from her Dancing Party, through her Announcement Tea (where "the general atmosphere should be one of uncrowded refinement") to the Wedding Table, the Dinner at Home, the Open House, the Baby Shower (which should be "as naive as the child itself") the Twenty-fifth Anniversary, and the Golden Wedding. Nor is the Bachelor Party omitted, offered by the bridegroom on the eve of his wedding. Here the colour scheme is masculine, in brown and green. "In the centre of the brown cloth two carved wooden figures of Adam and Eve stand within a Garden of Eden effected by slender bits of plant growth." We thus see that symbolism is not the sole prerogative of Nippon.

This life-history traced in terms of floral art concludes with a delicately worded passage giving advice about "the question of flowers at the time of death, which is often overlooked until necessity compels consideration." The casket-piece, we learn, should be light and airy and we learn further that the family florist will plan the pieces with the family and may with advantage be consulted. A most useful book. I really don't know which part I enjoyed most: the Japanese part, which is genuinely interesting, or the Western part, which I enjoyed for other reasons.

V. SACKVILLE-WEST

MARVELL

Andrew Marvell. By M. C. BRADBROOK and M. G. LLOYD THOMAS. *Cambridge University Press.* 7s. 6d.

Stendhal's *De l'Amour*, a weighty but somewhat capricious book, is famous for a single image, a single word. "Crystallisation" was the word borrowed by Stendhal to describe the stage in a lover's progress when his beloved is impossibly clothed with the radiance of his thoughts, and the image—a splendid one—came to him from the salt mines at Saltzburg, where, he had been told, a fallen branch after a few months would be retrieved covered with crystals. The word has since grown commonplace, so that a *Times* leader can be described as the crystallisation of something or other, but used particularly it still retains a little of its intensity. When I came across this sentence in *Andrew Marvell*: "In his religious poetry he seemed to need some external object, the poems crystallise round Dew or Tears or the Bermudas," I paused over the word *crystallise* as I should not have done if the passage had referred to Donne or Tennyson. With Marvell, the image is singularly appropriate; for the dozen poems by which he is well known have all the transformation and glitter of Stendhal's branch. They have lain in the mind and are taken out crusted: beautiful, surprising, complete and more than a little curious. Our first reaction to Marvell (it is likely to come through one or two pieces in an anthology) is a puzzled fascination which finds his poetry hard to break into and catches—wrongly as it turns out—at simplicities.

> Annihilating all that's made
> To a green thought in a green shade.

What could be simpler? And one looks for other thoughts as well-smoothed. These lines seem to offer a resting-place, to spread their ease over the surrounding verses; superseding, it may be, gladsome gardens and the like. And yet, if that were all, how queerly the poem adds up, how difficult to be certain of the words and to gauge their intensity! "A *green* thought in a green shade"—even there the adjective strikes strangely, recalling an earlier verse, "No white nor red was ever seen, So am'rous as this lovely green," and echoing a transparency which will be found elsewhere in Marvell.

> My Mind was once the true survey
> Of all these meadows fresh and gay;
> And in the greenness of the Grass
> Did see its Hopes as in a Glass.

Such paradoxes, giving a stained-glass light sometimes to the simplest of phrases, will inveigle the reader long before he grasps their real tone and meaning; it may take time before he recognises the full verbal chemistry of which Marvell is the master. That language, though smoother to the eye and ear than Hopkins', is no less particular.

> O who shall, from this Dungeon, raise
> A Soul inslav'd so many wayes?
> With bolts of Bones, that fetter'd stands
> In Feet; and manacled in Hands.
> Here blinded with an eye; and there
> Deaf with the drumming of an Ear.
> A Soul hung up, as 'twere, in Chains
> Of Nerves, and Arteries, and Veins. . . .

Fibre and wit. The two together enable Marvell to bring off the most astonishing feats which a flabbier delicacy would shrink from. The charming poem of the Nymph bewailing her fawn reaches a climax where the fawn takes on martyrdom:

> O help! O help! I see it faint:
> And dye as calmly as a Saint.
> See how it weeps. The Tears do come
> Sad, slowly dropping like a Gumme.
> So weeps the wounded Balsome; so
> The holy Frankincense doth flow. . . .

Any artificiality there is due to the lifting of the passage out of its setting, and not to incongruities of its own. Such an achievement (and the paradoxes of better-known *Bermudas* and *To his Coy Mistress* are hardly less audacious) continue to amaze us when we have followed the stages by which Marvell attained control. His early verse is ingenious, emblematic; and the process by which an engraving of the Lord's prayer on a sixpence became the living microcosm of his best poetry remains mysterious.

The personal climate of such a mind seems to-day inseparable from its age; and that not merely because we know so little about Marvell. Miss Bradbrook and Miss Lloyd Thomas base their criticism on a study of the changing vocabulary and attitudes of the time. Some very interesting details emerge. "The *Definition* of Love": the word when Marvell used it was technical and would produce an effect as odd as the heraldic "In a Field *Sable* a Lover *Gules*." "Green"—a keyword in Marvell's poetry—was the accepted colour of lovers; we are referred, most aptly, to a passage in *Love's Labour's Lost*. And the occasions in *The Garden* and elsewhere when the poet merges into the Nature he is contemplating are paralleled by doctrinal passages in which a similar metamorphosis is recommended to the devout. "The Spiritual Uses of the Orchard" is the sort of text-book Marvell took for granted. These and many other points throw a light on the conditions which made it possible for Marvell's poetry to be what it was. Civil war, commonwealth, restoration — Marvell lived through them with a warm impervious honesty. He was the poet of a literary transition; when the new science produced a

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2 They may be bought through Joint Stock Banks, Trustee Savings Banks, Post Offices or through your Stockbroker.

3 They may be bought in units of £5 or multiples of £5, for yourself or anyone who is entitled to hold them. For children under seven the application should be signed by a parent or a friend.

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5 Interest may be received direct in the form of a warrant or it may be paid into the owner's account in the Post Office Savings Bank or it may be remitted to a Joint Stock Bank or other Agent.

6 If the purchaser is liable to Income Tax the interest is subject to the rate of tax at which he is assessed—*but Income Tax is not deducted at the source.*

This is a particular advantage to the small investor who is not liable to Income Tax or is liable for tax at less than the normal rate. He is not put to the trouble of recovering tax.

7 You can be certain of getting back what you pay for Defence Bonds. They can be cashed at any time at their face value if six months' notice is given. In cases of private emergency the Bonds can be cashed at a few days' notice, less a deduction equal to six months' interest.

8 If you hold the Bonds for seven years you will receive on repayment £1 premium on every £100; that is to say, if you hold Bonds to the value of £5 you will be paid £5.1.0d. If to the value of £100 you will be paid £101.

By buying Defence Bonds you are not only helping yourself, you are also performing a great public duty, for the money invested in this security swells the resources with which we are fighting the war.

3% DEFENCE BONDS

Issued by The National Savings Committee, London

From

AN R.A.F. OFFICER in IRAQ

"*I have smoked your full-strength Punchbowle now for several years and find that it keeps in good condition in very high temperatures which one has to live in, in Egypt and in this country of sand. More so out here, of course, where this last month we have been as high as* 116° *shade temperature!*"

If you have read the letter above, you can picture the type of men who smoke this hefty, full-bodied "big-brother" of North Country Barneys: men on the really tough jobs overseas who need something unusually satisfying in the way of Tobacco, to inspire and to round-off the work of the day.

Punchbowle is not everybody's smoke; the average smoker should first try *medium* Barneys. Whichever strength suits *your* palate, this one thing is certain: Wherever and whenever you buy, the Tobacco will turn out as sweet and fresh as when packed . . . *that* is Barneys "EverFresh" protection, the wonder-packing which ensures *Factory-freshness* everywhere.

In Desert heat —and Arctic cold Barneys is always fresh!

Barneys (*medium*), Parsons Pleasure (*mild*), Punchbowle (*full*): in "EverFresh" Tins: **1/9½d. oz.**

(205 **Made by John Sinclair Ltd.**

new kind of poetry he gave up writing. Such "defence" of Marvell's character and politics as was needed has been convincingly provided by the authors of this little book. Their analysis of his poetry (though there would be room for a little more of it) is exact and sensitive. It assumes, perhaps, that the reader has studied the admirable essay on Marvell by Mr. Eliot reprinted in his Collected Essays.

G. W. STONIER

OUR OLDEST ENEMIES

Biological Aspects of Infectious Diseases. By F. M. BURNET. *Cambridge University Press.* 15*s.*

This is both an extremely interesting and, to me at any rate, a very depressing book. Depressing, not because of the writer's pessimistic outlook, but because of the reasonableness and probable truth of most of his statements and many of his inferences.

> What grows most rapidly and avoids death most successfully will survive. From the beginning, that has been the criterion by which all living organisms have been tested. Perhaps it is in regard to infectious disease that the working of this principle can be most clearly seen running through the whole history of life. Almost it might be said that life itself is no more than a disease of matter.

Practically without exception, all animals live at the expense of some other organism. Speaking more particularly of micro-organisms, Dr. Burnet says:

> We have an inter-action between two organisms which, if it swings in favour of one, is an act of digestion, if in favour of the other, it is an attack of infectious disease. As we ascend the scale of animal life, we find the same essential theme repeated in infinite variation.

And here is the note on which the book ends:

> In the days when it seemed possible to look forward to the general progressive spread of an increasingly scientific civilisation, it might have been of interest to outline the possibilities and limitations of future control of infectious disease, particularly in the tropics. Nowadays we see more clearly what may perhaps have always been the reality, that the course of world history depends much more on the unresolved psychological tangles of nations and their rulers than on the advance and application of human knowledge. . . . We can be quite certain, however, that on its side infectious disease will, as in the past, play a vital, if often unrecognised, part in determining the shape of things to come. A really serious world-wide epidemic might perhaps do more to set going a sense of genuine international co-operation than anything else.

The last paragraph of all embodies a likely enough picture of the future of mankind if scientific civilisation continues its advance and its increasing conquest over its traditional enemies, the unicellular organisms, whilst, at the same time, Africa and other tropical regions remain under the political control, and subject to the economic exploitation, of nationalistic European and Asiatic Powers. "Perpetual poverty and periodic outbreaks of war would be the only result of what in a sane world should be the greatest contribution science could make to human welfare."

So much by way of summary of what we may call the philosophic background of a book of which the greater number of pages are devoted to an extremely clear exposition of the established facts about epidemic and other infectious diseases, their history, their biological implications, and the physiological weapons with which man is naturally provided for combating them. The ways in which science has succeeded in supplementing and in strengthening these inborn armaments are enumerated and illuminatingly explained. The possibilities of controlling epidemic disorders by all sorts of sanitary measures, by industrial and economic reorganisation, by the reform of our daily habits, dietetic and other, and by artificial mass immunisation, are clearly and critically described. Dr. Burnet's bonnet is singularly free from bees; and, whilst his outlook cannot be called enthusiastically optimistic, the truth-loving reader will appreciate the cool, refreshing frankness, scientific candour and courage which characterise an important and informative book.

HARRY ROBERTS

IMMORTALITY

The Testament of Immortality. An Anthology. Arranged by N. G. with a preface by T. S. ELIOT. *Faber.* 8*s.* 6*d.*

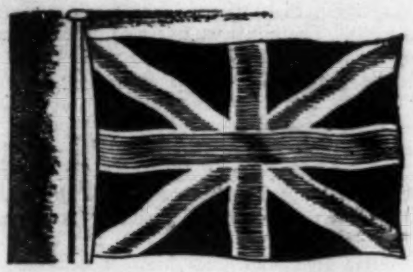
This is an anthology with a directing purpose: compiled after a bereavement, it sets out immortality and embroiders death. Since there can be few poets or prose writers of any age or race who have not written about death, and most of these have also speculated on immortality, the choice in such compiling must be from riches, and comes down to individual taste; much, too, must be left untouched (there is, rather oddly, no Shakespeare here). N. G. ranges from west to east, obviously with considerable knowledge of Indian, Chinese and Persian literature, both old and new, and is afraid neither of mysticism nor of the emotional commonplace. He does not arrange his extracts either by chronology or, I think, theme; they have the air of having been put down in the order in which he found them—Boehme, Tolstoy, Donne, George Eliot, Chuang Tzu, A. C. Benson, Shelley, Adelaide Proctor, Borrow, Tagore, Vaughan, Canon Streeter, the Bible, Ramakrishna, Raleigh, Siegfried Sassoon, the *Times*, Vedic incantations, nineteenth-century clergymen, known and unknown poets, all jumbled together. It is not a snob anthology; the compiler has chosen what appeals to him, regardless of fashion. Its weakness is suggested in its title, which seems to weight the scales slightly against merely agnostic speculations (such, for instance, as Hamlet's); nevertheless, Lowes Dickinson and other agnostics are well represented, and the trend is broad.

It is easier to write well about death than about life after death, probably because death, besides being eloquent, just and mighty, is a fact of experience and of strong emotional power, while thoughts on survival are apt to be either cloudy speculations, or assumptions which sound conventional and wishful in all but the finest language. There has been a mass of rather second-rate stuff about immortality, and some of it has inevitably got into this anthology; it is remarkable how starkly and impressively death, even when mollified and adorned by the melancholy sentiments of bereavement, stands out. Survive we may; but it is uncommonly hard to make good poetry or prose out of it. Die we must; and the fact is almost poetry in itself, as the Greek anthologists knew. "It is most grand to die," says Masefield.

> Death is so dumb and blind. Death cannot understand.
> Death drifts the brain with dust and soils the young limbs' glory.
> Death makes woman a dream and man a traveller's story,
> Death drives the lovely soul to wander under the sky,
> Death opens unknown doors. It is most grand to die.

The grandeur of finality should be, but is not, enough for us. Man's nets have been continually flung at the skies to catch some strange immortality; they have netted a great number of fine stars and clouds and shafts of light, and many of these, along with some dross, will be found here. Some of the best come from the east; or is it only that they are less familiar? Probably. Anyhow, this is an interestingly catholic collection.

ROSE MACAULAY



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FREE
FROM
PAIN

The greatest cause of all time is the crusade against Cancer, that dread disease responsible for 74,000 deaths in a single year. This colossal waste of human life, with its attendant misery and pain of thousands of sufferers MUST BE STOPPED. Despite the war, despite hard times, despite the rising cost of equipment and supplies—yes ! in spite of all, The Royal Cancer Hospital must be helped to continue its good work. So if you can only send shillings instead of pounds—send them all the same.

The Royal
Cancer Hospital
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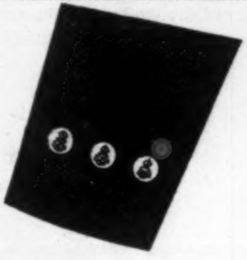

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Who can blame our 'snotty' for wishing to corner the whole of the Navy's supply of Vinolia. Vinolia gives him such a perfect shave that in a tight corner his chin could be used to flash messages in the sun. But does the 'snotty' succeed in keeping Vinolia to himself? Not likely. All ranks shave with Vinolia. Vinolia rules the shaves.

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POETRY
(London)

Issued bi-monthly, is devoted entirely to the publication and criticism of modern verse. We hope that poetry lovers, all over the world, will help us continue by taking out an annual subscription for 7/-.

The next number (No. 3), appearing on Nov. 15, will contain work by **Nicholas Moore, David Gascoyne, Stephen Spender, Herbert Read,** and others. Old subscribers please send addresses.

Edited by **Tambimuttu at 25 Marchmont St., W.C.1**

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Vita-Weat springs from British soil and it builds British nerves

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MUST GO ON

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In this great struggle in which we are all now engaged, your contribution is more than ever needed.

Send in yours to-day.

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MATHEMATICS SIMPLIFIED. The square root of 2 is 1.414, but the root of cigar satisfaction is 8d.—the price of a King Six at your tobacconist.

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Donations and Poppy Sellers are urgently needed. Offers to local Poppy Day Committee, or to HAIG'S FUND, Cardigan House, Richmond, Surrey.

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is the Time
TO PREVENT
ILLS & CHILLS
with
'ASPRO'

The sudden change of weather conditions is spreading ills and chills. After the delightful summer weather people are feeling the effects of the quick change. Colds are prevalent and people exposed to the damp and chilly night air are very liable to sore throats, feverishness and rheumatic conditions. There is no need, though, to let them develop into anything more serious. In fact, 'ASPRO' will quickly nip them in the bud. The remedy is available to all at small cost for millions have proved by experience beyond a shadow of doubt that the action of taking 'ASPRO' tablets at the inception of numerous complaints definitely prevents complications. 'ASPRO' saves your time, saves your money and saves the nation loss of production through people lying up.

'Aspro' Solves the Problem of Sleeplessness-it Soothes the Nerves-brings Easy Sleep —Refreshed Awakening

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72a Townholm Crescent,
Hanwell, W.7.

Dear Sir,

I am a lorry driver and I am out in all weathers and it does not take long to get a cold, but as soon as I feel a cold coming I drop back on a glass of hot lemon and three 'ASPRO' tablets and I find, by the morning, I am my old self again.

Yours faithfully,
G. Kay.

SORE THROATS ENDED AFTER THREE 'ASPRO' GARGLES

220, Carlisle Street, Balaclava,
Victoria, Australia.

Dear Sirs,

A short time ago I had a very bad throat, almost closed up and very sore, with signs of a heavy cold coming on. I immediately gargled my throat with 'ASPRO,' as well as taking it as you direct. After the first gargle my throat eased up considerably and after the third gargle all soreness left, my cold disappeared and I was my old self again.

Yours faithfully,
E. HOLLOWAY (Mrs.).

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The History of Local Government in Manchester. Vol. III. The Last Half Century. By ARTHUR REDFORD. Assisted by I. S. RUSSELL. *Longmans.* 21s.

It is unnecessary to give more than brief notice to this final volume of Mr. Redford's centenary history of local government in Manchester. The narrow interpretation placed on the subject makes this volume much more than its predecessors a summary of Council proceedings and a plain record of municipal expansion. In this field it is competent and comprehensive; but it has none of the vividness of Sir Ernest Simon's book describing the actual work of the Manchester City Council; and no attempt is made to consider the real significance of Manchester's growth in its relation to the changing structure of British industry and of the British social system. Those who want the facts—and very important many of them are—about Manchester's municipal development can go to Mr. Redford's book with the assurance of finding them clearly set out; but the reader will be left to make his own interpretations and, unless he is already keenly interested, will hardly find Mr. Redford easy to read.

Week-end Competitions

No. 561

Set by William Whitebait

Every year at examination time the newspapers provide a crop of "schoolboy howlers." Schoolboys, however, are not alone in giving themselves away idiotically, and you are invited to submit a set of three grown-up howlers. These should be if possible authentic, and should amuse as well as howl. When anecdotes are involved competitors are asked to be brief.

RULES—

1. Envelopes should be marked with the number of the Problem, in the top left-hand corner, and should be addressed to COMPETITIONS, c/o Cornwall Press, 1-6 Paris Garden, Stamford Street, S.E.1. Solutions must reach the Editor by first post on Monday, November 18th.

2. The Editor's decision is final. He reserves the right to print in part or as a whole any matter sent in, whether it be awarded a prize or not. MSS. cannot be returned. When no entries reach the required standard no prize will be awarded.

RESULT OF COMPETITION No. 559

Set by B. Van Thal

A time-bomb has lodged itself outside your residence: you are given ten minutes to clear out. Apart from dressing and putting on your mink and astrakhan-lined coat, what would you take?

Report by B. Van Thal

Having actual experience, this competition I read the practical entries with feeling and understanding. In spite of this, I have not had my sense of humour entirely blown out. As a male, I turned with greater interest to the entries of the other sex. I had definite preconceived ideas, but I hoped no woman would leave without make-up, jewels or silk stockings. After all, Marguerite exclaimed, "Surely this is not I," when opening the casket and donning jewels. Meg Seaton, for instance, had no hesitation of "slapping on the old diamond tiara, loading her torso with pearls and filling her pockets with ruby rings." All very sensible, but for the fact "she did not possess them." On the other hand, "Housewife" touched me deeply. There is no doubt readers have been helped by this competition, since numbers have written to say they have been stimulated to some practical thinking. To these I feel very much *in loco parentis*, or like a boy scout having achieved a good deed.

Too many competitors chose to take away Lares and Penates easily replaceable. Others could have never got away with three-quarters of what they proposed taking. The police chivvy one and the actual experience Miss Preston relates was that only food was really valuable to them. Mrs. Bell was extremely practical but even included her Parker-Knoll chair. Imagine the invaluable use of one's dentures mentioned by "Beda" and many others, and Gwen Teagle's "letter of her sole marriage proposal" was delightfully touching. Perhaps she would like to communicate with me (through this paper). I liked too Araminta's "pin-cushion M. gave her last Xmas and the lock of hair worn by Lt. Lord L—— when a child." Men who are the real possessors of Lares and Penates were to be more than sympathised with as to deciding what to take, Wilkinson's hesitation of "his late Cotman, 9in. × 7in.," can be understood; and certainly Arnold Hyde's Baskerville "Congreve" and John Rogue's "Plan of the Cities of London and Westminster and Southwark, 1714." On the other hand, there is the joy of ridding oneself of mile-stones. Sir Robert Witt's "opportunity of leaving my wedding presents behind" pleased me. The entries were very numerous and good. I suggest the prizes be equally divided between:

(1) Charles Furbank for his brevity.
(2) "Housewife" for her remarkable unselfishness.
(3) Hector MacTavish for his true Scots feeling.
(4) N. Bodington for feeling like I did myself when it came to actuality.

Beyond the articles mentioned, I would bear away a mistress, a game pie, and a Bible, thus satisfying the three principal centres of the body.

CHARLES FURBANK

One elderly relative, warmly wrapped up and seated in invalid chair.

Two evacuee children, with one small attaché case containing their little all.

One baby, complete with cradle, nappies, shawls and 24-hours' feed.

One husband, deeply sleeping.

One cook-housemaid-cum-nurse in hysterics.

One dachshund.

One tabby.

Three rabbits.

One pram to carry them away in.

(P.S.—Own clothing for most part overlooked, especially dental plate and astrakhan-lined coat. Must remember these next time.)

"HOUSEWIFE"

SIR,—Ye ask what me and ma wife carried awa wi us "apart from mink and astrakhan coats" when that invention o the De'il, a time-bomb, fell on the muirs alongside our hoose. I didna ken what ye meant by the coats but Jeannie tells me it's the English for our Kirk claes and they were the first things she packed in the box. Next, she was for taking the meal from the cupboard but, "wuman," I said to her, "I whiles wonder at ye for ye think o nothing but mateerial needs," and I bid her take wi us the immorrtal works of our Rabbie and to fetch the whusky from the shelf for I wudnae waste the guid spirit that's been a friend to us many a cauld nicht. The bottle we wrapped in ma Sabbath breeks for it wouldnae be a sicht for sair ees to the meenister, puir man, who was waiting for us in his auld car. By now there was nae time to be lost and I could but seize the sma jug with "a present fra Aberdeen" writ across it in which Jeannie keeps our savings o threepenny bits. Ye ken the wee pieces are nae longer made o siller. There's many a meeting in these pairts wi a siller collection and if I hadnae brought the auld pieces awa we should ha had tae give saxpence. Man, it doesnae bear thinking of. Your obedient sairvant,

HECTOR MACTAVISH

. . . Now let me think . . . the most essential thing is my cheque-book, I mean with that one can. . . . Where the devil did I put it? . . . I might have known it wouldn't be in that drawer, I turned it out last week, didn't I? . . . Ha, Sharp and Dose's bill, I certainly don't want that—the nerve of them! What am I looking for? Oh my goodness, of course . . . oh, for goodness sake hurry! Well, I suppose it doesn't really matter, I can always get another one. . . . What else, then? . . . Oh do *concentrate*. . . . Change of clothing, they say—socks and things. . . . Thank goodness I don't go to pieces in a crisis, I feel perfectly calm and cool. As cool as a clam, clam as a calm. . . .

How stupid it is really to be sitting on the floor bothering with socks and pants and things when I'm leaving all this for ever. And where am I going, by the way? Stepping out into the night for all the world like the hero of a novel. . . . Listen to that, will you, I'm not going out in that. Why can't I be let die here quietly if I choose? I'll tell them. . . . "Keen-eyed, with a firm mouth that bespoke quick decisions, he strode swiftly to the door . . ." that's me.

Oh Lord, Mattakinsky's cello! I shall have to. . . . It would be a crime. . . . A Strad cello—and there are only two others in the world. But what a damn nuisance to have to cart that around. How typical of that fool Mattakinsky!

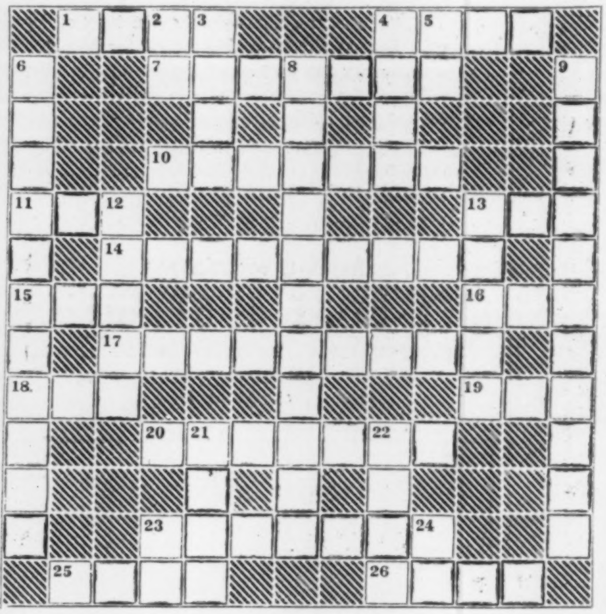
What already! Impossible! All right, all right, I'm coming. Yes, I must take it—very valuable—no, it's not mine, it's a friend's. Hold it a second, will you? . . .

So—so sorry to have kept you waiting. I just wanted to get this knife, it's got a rather useful little gadget for removing stones from horses' hooves. . . .

N. BODINGTON

WEEK-END CROSSWORD 6

Set by V. S.



The last week's winner is:

Dr. R. B. Latter, 369 Fulham Road, S.W.10.

ACROSS

1. Backward (4).
4. Eager to make a 6*d*. (4).
7. Straw being about twopence (7).
10. More Navy? (7).
11. See 23 down.
13. The tart of easy virtue (3).
14. Plenty here for a cake-walk! (9).
15 *rev.* Haggard heroine (3).
16. Fish of the future (3).
17. Please make bearer drink beer (9).
18 and 24. Thin enough to do without extra room (5).
19. Half yearly vote (3).
20. Snickered like a carriage horse in the van (7).
23. Not a natural horseman (7).
25. Mean answer to first question in catechism (4).
26. Southend? (4).

DOWN

2. Jack in a box! (2)
3. One may be bored though healthy (4).
4. Royal corpse buried in Johannesburg (4).
5. Marked approbation for the extremes of vamping (2).
6. : The Spanish ship (11).
8. Doctor, 'e 'ad nothing! (11).
9. The donkey always ate Bob declares (11).
12. Trial, so to speak (5).
13. Liquor by railway (5).
21. The cockney was particular how he hit them (4).
22. Printers' measure us birds (4).
23. and 11. No going back when within cry of a friend (5).
24. Note: See 18 (2).

LAST WEEK'S CROSSWORD

S	L	I	L	Y	▨	M	▨	I	D	A	H	O
T	▨	N	▨	▨	▨	E	▨	▨	▨	N	▨	G
O	R	▨	L	E	A	N	D	E	R	▨	E	L
U	▨	A	▨	I	▨	I	▨	X	▨	I	▨	E
T	▨	C	A	R	N	A	T	I	O	N	▨	D
▨	▨	A	▨	E	▨	L	▨	T	▨	V	▨	▨
M	A	C	E	▨	A	S	S	▨	T	E	R	M
▨	▨	I	▨	O	▨	E	▨	A	▨	R	▨	▨
R	▨	A	S	P	A	R	A	G	U	S	▨	I
I	▨	S	▨	E	▨	V	▨	A	▨	E	▨	S
P	O	▨	I	N	N	I	N	G	S	▨	U	S
O	▨	O	▨	▨	▨	C	▨	▨	▨	O	▨	U
N	A	N	N	Y	▨	E	▨	H	I	N	G	E

Books to the value of Five Shillings may be chosen by the sender of the first correct solution opened. Post solutions to arrive not later than first delivery Wednesday following the date of issue, addressed to "CROSSWORDS," "NEW STATESMAN AND NATION," c/o Cornwall Press, Paris Garden, Stamford Street, London, S.E.1.

THE WEEK IN THE CITY

By CYNICUS

GILT-EDGED BOOMLET—A RAILWAY CRITICISM—FIXED TRUSTS

BRITISH Government stocks are on the move, and some City enthusiasts would like to believe that they are on the "up and up." Sentiment has undoubtedly improved, but there is, of course, a limit to the rise. Gilt-edged stocks can only boom when the supply of them is limited and the market demand for them appears to be unlimited. But to-day the supply is almost unlimited, for Savings Certificates and 3 per cent. Defence Bonds are on tap to the small investor and 2½ per cent. National War Bonds are on tap to the big investor. Under our existing closed economy, in which no capital can be exported and no foreign capital can be imported, the existing pool of gilt-edged stocks can only rise in market value if (1) British capital accumulated abroad is sold to foreigners and repatriated for re-investment in British Government stocks, or (2) if all new savings do not entirely flow into the tap issues but overflow into the existing pool. Both contingencies arise at the present time. In the first place, part of the proceeds of the recent requisitioning of Canadian securities will be reinvested in the gilt-edged market, and in the second place the institutional investors are not putting all their new money into 2½ per cent. War Bonds, but part of it into 3½ per cent. War Loan or the existing long-dated stocks. Some satisfy their conscience or the letter of the confusing Bank of England request by putting their new money into 2½ per cent. National War Bonds to begin with and then, after a month or so, selling these bonds and re-investing in 3½ per cent. War Loan or the "longs." This may be hypocritical, but Pope Norman is at the Bank to grant absolution of their sins. Here, then, is the explanation of the present rise in the gilt-edged market. All good things come to an end

* * *

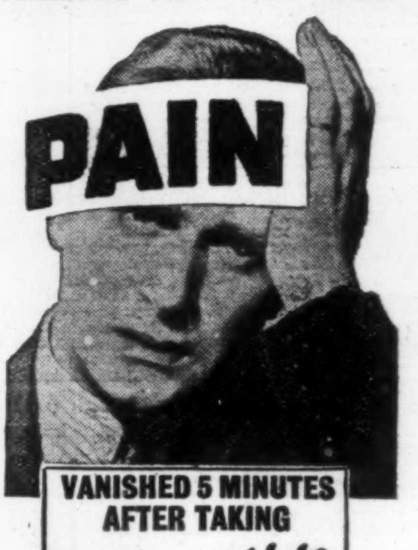
I have already made the suggestion that the "tap" issue of 2½ per cent. National War Bonds should be discontinued. As no insurance company can make ends meet on such a low return as 2½ per cent., it means that the big investors are not pulling their full weight. Of course the Treasury may be winking at the surreptitious selling of 2½ per cent. War Bonds which is going on, because re-investment out of these into the "longs" is driving up the prices of other gilt-edged securities and tending to bring down the long-term rate of interest. But I suggest that a new medium-term 3 per cent. issue would have a far greater success in the market and tend to stabilise the long-term rate at, say, 3¼ per cent.

* * *

A director of the London Midland and Scottish Railway complained of my statement that the financial agreement between the Government and the railways enabled the railways to have a virtual monopoly of traffic and to retain half of their increased earnings (up to a maximum) although other industries have had to give up their entire increase. "I cannot see," he writes, "any foundation for the first statement and, as regards the second, the position is the exact reverse, in that the railways are the only undertakings I am aware of who are (*a*) required to pay part of their earnings to the Government, (*b*) restricted to low maximum profits not applied to other undertakings, and (*c*) are subject to the same law as all others in regard to taxation." This director has an advantage over me in that he knows the details of this agreement while I do not, for they have never yet been published. But I still maintain, first, that the drastic rationing of petrol and the cut in the output of new motor vehicles have forced traffic to the railways to the point of giving them a virtual monopoly, and secondly, that although all other industries have to hand over to the Government under E.P.T. 100 per cent. of their war increase in earnings, the railways are only forced to hand over half their increase until their "standard" revenues (the railways' dreamland) have been obtained. The railway director's remark that the railways are subject to the same law as others in regard to taxation is the vital point. Does he mean that the railways will pay E.P.T. on the top of the Government agreement or not? The Stock Exchange has always been under the impression that the railways are excluded from E.P.T., and the silence of the Government and railway directors on this point is significant.

* * *

A correspondent writes to air a grievance he has been nursing over an investment in the Fixed Trusts. (He paid 20*s*. for a sub-unit which is now valued at 8*s*. 3*d*.) He was induced to subscribe in two fixed equity trusts on the advertiser's assurance that the distribution of risk over a large number of leading equity shares gave the investor stability and the minimum of fluctuation in market values. I have always criticised the Fixed Trusts for their inexact and misleading advertisements. You cannot eliminate the risks of investing in equity shares by spreading the risk over two hundred instead of two. A Fixed Trust unit of ordinary shares must go either up or down with the market in equity shares as a whole. Investment stability can only be secured by spreading capital over every class of investment—gilt-edged, debentures, preference shares and ordinary shares, and even so, investment will then be exposed to the risk of holding paper securities as opposed to land or other fixed assets. As a matter of fact, it is impossible to spread an investment so scientifically that the fall in one class of security is offset by the rise of another.



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